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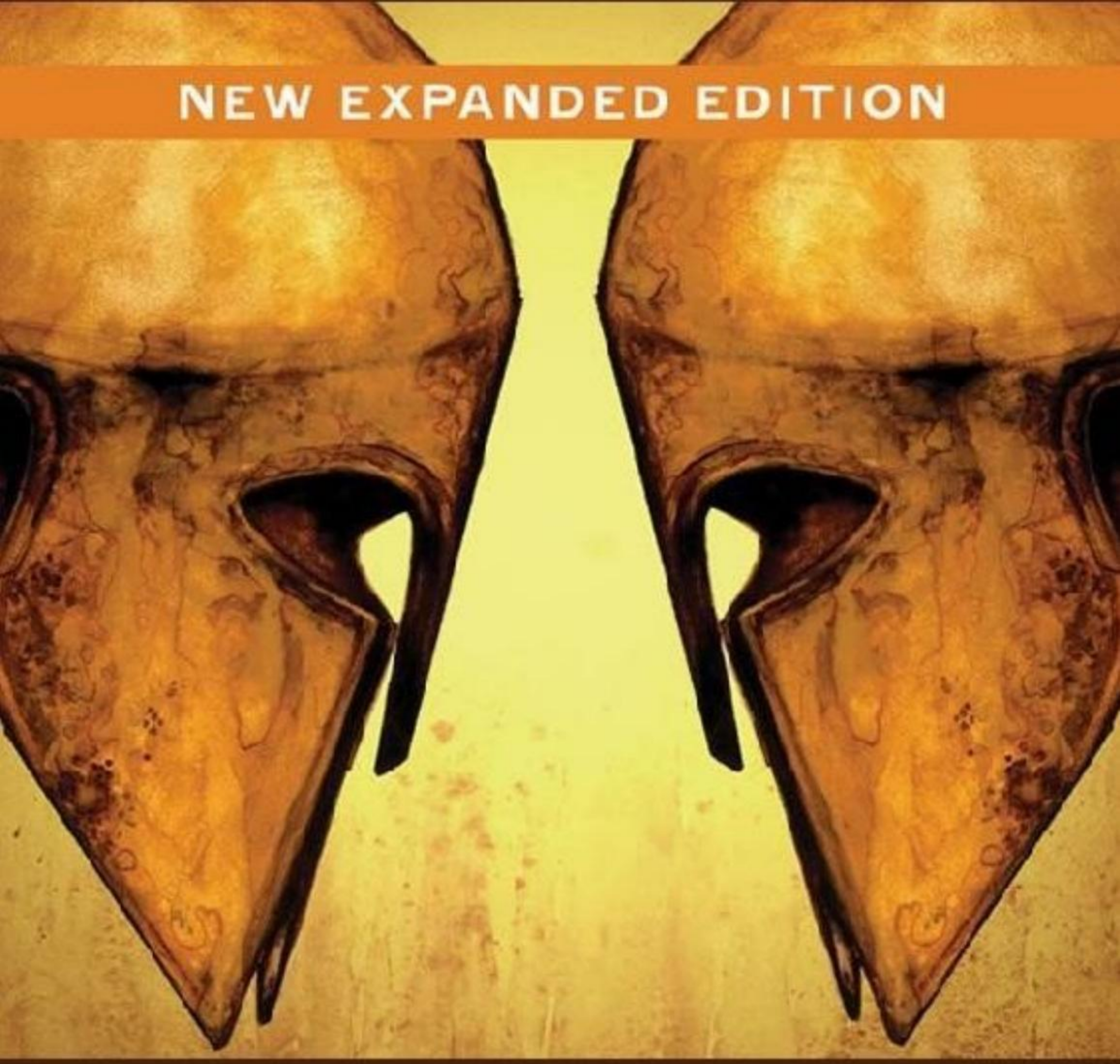

JACK DONOVAN

ANDROPHILIA

REJECTING THE GAY IDENTITY
RECLAIMING MASCULINITY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2012 Introduction to the Third Edition
2006 Introduction
ANDROPHILIA: A MANIFESTO
GAY IS DEAD (Or At Least It's Dead to Me)
"Androphilia" - Sexuality As Preference
Gay Party Crashing
The Stigma of Effeminacy
"MAN" - The Natural Religion of Men
Toward a Masculine Ideal
Character, Not Caricature
Taking Back Masculinity
Andro Culture - A Fraternity Within
AN ESSAY ON SAME SEX MARRIAGE
Agreements Between Men
AFTERTHOUGHTS
2010 Afterword
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
ARCHIVE
2008 Essay: "Why I Treat Straight Men Like Married Women"
2008 Interview:"Andro in the Army"
2012 Essay: "The Homosexual Question"

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8. Gender Studies

2012 Introduction to the Third Edition

Androphilia was still being read and discovered when it went out of print. I always owned the copyright, but my original publishers at Scapegoat are friends, and I wanted to give them the opportunity to reprint the book. They wanted to – it was one of their most successful books – but because of some unrelated circumstances, the money never came together for a second run.

As copies of *Androphilia* became harder to find and more expensive, I often received emails from men asking when it was going back into print. *Androphilia* was sold by word-of-mouth. It was passed from one man to another. Guys bought copies for their friends or gave their copies away. Young homosexual men come of age all the time, and they grapple with the same frustrations I had to deal with.

"Does being attracted to men really mean I have to prance around in glitter and hot pants and wave rainbow flags like the fags I see in Gay Pride Parades?"

"Do I really have to worship Madonna" became *"Do I really have to worship Lady Gaga?"*

"I'm into guys, but I'm not a girl, and I don't want to act like one."

"Why does being a homo mean I have to vote for politicians who I don't agree with."

"Does being sexually attracted to men mean I have to be a feminist?"

These young men would hear about the book, want a copy, and find it was hard to come by. In 2011, Scapegoat put out a Kindle edition of *Androphilia*, with a new Afterword I wrote for it in 2010. I've included that in this edition, and it's a good bridge between my thoughts on homosexual men in 2006 and what I learned from my experiences after *Androphilia* was published. Don't skip it.

I don't write much about homosexuality these days. I write for men.

I meant what I said in *Androphilia*. Gay is dead to me. On the rare occasion that I end up in a gay bar or even in a group of homosexual men, I feel like an awkward impostor—a double agent. I'm more at home hanging out with straight pals at the rack of one of Portland's many strip clubs. The gay world isn't my world anymore.

My most recent book, *The Way of Men* (Dissonant Hum, 2012) represents six years of work that started with a question I asked in *Androphilia*.

"What is masculinity?"

If you find that you are unsatisfied with my first stabs at answering that question in the later chapters of *Androphilia*, so was I. I spent more time dissecting feminist ideas about

masculinity. I wrote for some anti-feminist web sites, including *The Spearhead*, and finally released my in-depth criticisms of feminist and men's movement "masculinities" as an e-book titled *No Man's Land*. You can find it for free on my web site at **www.jack-donovan.com**. *The Way of Men* is a comprehensive theory of masculinity, what I call the "gang theory" of masculinity. The idea, presented first in *Androphilia*, that masculinity is the "natural religion of men" is a jumping off point for understanding one of the big takeaways from *The Way of Men*: that, "there is a difference between being a good man and being good at being a man."

In its final chapter, I wrote:

"As culture becomes increasingly female- and family-friendly, as 'men-only' institutions continue to fall from favor or become integrated, as masculinity is controlled, compromised and redefined according to the preferences and aesthetics of women—as straight men lose touch with their own masculine heritage—I see a role for androphiles as masculine purists, unlikely carriers of Mars' ancient torch. Masculinity is a religion, and I see potential for androphiles to become its priests—to devote themselves to it and to the gods of men as clergymen devote their lives to the supernatural."

That's become my life's work.

Because I write about traditional, primal masculinity for all men, *Androphilia* is a bit of a liability. It's a distraction for young straight men—who now make up the greater part of my readership—to have to process the fact that the guy telling them how to act like a man is a homo. My response is that, as an *androphile* who has travelled in the social worlds of effeminate males and women as well as the world of men, I am uniquely placed to understand the differences between all of those worlds. I know what women say about men when they are talking to "the girls" and the "gay best friend." I know what straight men say about what gay men get wrong about masculinity. I see the hypocrisies that homosexual men see in the criticisms of straight men. Homosexual men have always travelled between these different worlds and offered a unique perspective. It's only when they "came out" that their culture became "meta"—that everything they produced became *about* being a homosexual. Androphilia is my *meta* work. I'd rather be known for writing about masculinity. I have a tattoo of the word HONOR across my stomach. The respect and admiration of strong men and honorable men—regardless of sexual preference—is more important to me than any kind of notoriety among homosexual men.

As such, I've had mixed feelings about re-releasing *Androphilia*. But, as I was complaining about all of that, a young guy who'd read *Androphilia* in high school shot me an angry look and said, "Stop being selfish. That book *helps* people." So, it's in that spirit that I'm putting *Androphilia* back into print.

I've added a few things to this edition, because I wanted them archived together with the

main text. Online writing comes and goes. Sites go offline. The Internet changes. Books stick around at least a little bit longer. So, I'm using this edition to compile some of my most important pieces on the topic of homosexuality.

In 2008, I wrote an essay on "Why I Treat Straight Men Like Married Women." It's an important addition to *Androphilia* because as homosexuality becomes more accepted, homos get ballsier about making moves on straight guys. Unless you're really sure they're into it, *not cool*. Homosexual men don't deserve to be accepted into the world of men if they can't respect boundaries.

In the same year, I conducted an interview with a young man who—like several others—decided to join the military at least partially as a result of reading *Androphilia*. I don't know if his views are still the same, and for political reasons I'm a little more conflicted about advising young men to join the military today. But this kind of thing happened a few times, and I wanted to include it here for the record.

The first major piece I submitted to *Alternative Right*, an online journal for radical traditionalists and various far-right dissidents, was an essay on the US military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. It was posted as the policy was being hotly debated, during the year before the policy was finally abandoned. As The Gay Party made leftist arguments for the end of the policy, I might have been the only homosexual man publicly arguing for the policy's end from a masculinist, right-wing perspective. "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is gone now, and some of the fears that my far-right friends had were legitimized. I hear the Pentagon now hosts gay pride events now. Not exactly what I was hoping for. Still, I believe that "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" was an absurd policy, and that right-thinking homosexual men can effectively fight alongside their heterosexual brothers in any military, police or paramilitary action. Asking them to lie to their comrades is asking them to lie to the men they have to be prepared to die for. It's an insult to the spirit of brotherhood—to the unity of the gang—that fighting men must cultivate in order to win.

I should also note that the first edition of *Androphilia* was published under the pseudonym "Jack Malebranche." I no longer use that name, and this edition will be published under the same name I use for writing and for everything else: Jack Donovan.

Androphilia was originally dedicated *to androphiles*, and it still is.

GAY IS DEAD!

—Jack Donovan

Milwaukie, Oregon

September 2012

2006 Introduction

I never wanted to be a gay writer.

The last thing I ever wanted to become was a professional homosexual.

The manifesto that follows is a rejection of the idea that the experience of homosexual desire should determine a man's tastes, his behavior, his friends or his politics. It's a rejection of the idea that sexuality creates a complete identity or defines a man.

Men should be defined by what they do, not who they screw. Sex is great, and it's part of life. But it's merely *part* of life. I prefer men sexually, but that's no accomplishment. It's nothing to be proud of. Simply being a man who loves men is no legitimate claim to fame.

For a man with these convictions, stepping into the spotlight to speak out about homosexuality is somewhat contradictory.

However, those who never speak are rarely heard.

The overwhelming majority of books on homosexuality are written by academics, professional homosexuals, and those deeply invested in the gay community. They are written by those who depend on the gay community for their livelihoods, for acclaim, and for support. These gays have a vested interest in kowtowing to the sacred ideologies of the gay community and in portraying that community in a positive light. They're afraid to bite the hand that feeds them; they are careful not to offend the wrong people. They are handicapped by their dependence on the gay world.

To paraphrase a line from the film *Fight Club*, I am free in all of the ways that they are not.

In *Androphilia*, I haven't held back. I've made no concessions. I've said exactly what I meant to say.

An author who read this manuscript warned that it would "ruin my life," and that I would be blackballed by the gay community. But my life is completely independent of the gay community. I rarely go to gay events. I darken the doorstep of a gay bar only a handful of times each year. Not all of my friends are same-sex oriented. I most often travel in circles where my sexuality is irrelevant. The homosexual and bisexual men with whom I associate are also critical of the gay community. I have a fun, fulfilling, nearly fraternal relationship with my long- term partner, to whom I've referred throughout the book as my *compadre* —"partner" has always seemed like a neutered or lesbian word to me. I have a supportive family. I have interests that have nothing to do with my sexuality. The gay community can't ruin my life, because it's really not a part of my life.

This book is being released by Scapegoat Publishing. Their advertising slogan is "Blame Us!"

It's extremely appropriate in this case.

Go ahead. Blame me. Insult me. Blackball me.

I can take your hate. I don't need your love, your acceptance or your approval.

I didn't write this book for gays. Nor did I write it simply to provoke controversy.

I wrote this book for men who love men but who are sick to death of the gay community. I wrote it to give a voice to men who have rarely seen their feelings about homosexuality and gay culture in print. What I've written is based not only on my own observations, but also on countless conversations I've had with men much like myself. I don't consider myself a writer. I'm just a guy with something to say, something that is often expressed privately but is almost never said publicly. I wrote this book because no one else would. It is a rant, but it is a rant echoing thousands of rants that have faded into the din of bars, restaurants and cyberspace.

While my opinions are ultimately my own, and I don't expect my comrades in dissent to agree with every word I've written—I expect them to be men in their own right with their own ideas—early reactions to this manifesto have been enthusiastic. The recurring exclamation from such men has been, "Finally!" Gays would like to believe that those same-sex- inclined men who want little or nothing to do with the gay community or who disagree with gay ideology are a few isolated self-hating Roy Cohns. I believe they are legion. And I don't think most of them hate themselves or hate being attracted to men. But because these men are busy living their lives without wrapping themselves in their sexual identity, because they are busy simply *being men*, they go unnoticed. I wrote this book for them.

While I've always been critical of the gay hive mind, I haven't always been the outsider I am now. I spent a significant portion of my life traveling in gay circles, hanging out in gay bars and gossiping with queens. In the early 1990s, I was a go-go dancer in New York City's club kid scene. I ran around in elaborate costumes and makeup. I've shaved my body, colored my hair, and pierced my eyebrow. I've been a fashion fag and an enthusiastic pop-culture addict. I've challenged gender constructs. I've done drag. I talked the talk and fagged out with the best of them. I've been to backrooms, leather clubs, bear bars, hipster hangouts and circuit parties. I even marched in a gay pride parade once. I know the gay community from the inside out. My critique of gay culture doesn't come from an outsider's ignorance; it comes from an insider's knowledge. I know what the gay lifestyle has to offer. It can be fun and exciting, especially when it's new and especially for the young.

Eventually, I realized that while I was experiencing many things in the gay world, I was shutting out so much more. I was living in a gay bubble, dissociated from nongay men and cut off from a part of myself that was distinctly, unmistakably male. I became increasingly attracted to masculinity as an ideal and to the things men typically enjoy. I found that many of the interests and pursuits I'd written off as an adolescent were far more appealing to me, even surprisingly satisfying as a grown man. While some masculine-identified homos never adopt the gay lifestyle at all, I've seen many others go through this cycle. When the dazzling disco ball of the gay world becomes less blinding, they reevaluate and reconfigure

themselves. They become interested in what it means to be an adult male. They strike out in search of their lost manhood. I believe this desire to rediscover one's innate maleness is in part what makes the leather and bear subcultures so popular with men over 30. It's part of the reason why many lithe, laughing young party boys start pumping iron and end up looking more like bodybuilders. It's part of what drove Yukio Mishima to abandon the sedentary lifestyle of an intellectual, take up kendo and form a paramilitary organization.

Men who love men have a place in a world beyond the gay world; they have a place in the world of men. Culture created by and for men is the richest culture on the planet. Human history is primarily a story about the deeds and achievements of men. This history is the true heritage and birthright of every male, if he chooses to claim it.

Androphilia is an effort to reclaim this rich male heritage for men who love men. It dismisses those who want to confine homosexual males to a clichéd effeminate stereotype. *Androphilia* suggests a different way to perceive homosexual desire and encourages homosexual and bisexual men to thrive unhindered by the limitations of the gay identity. This book is about seceding from the gay community and rediscovering masculinity. It is a dare to leave the gay world completely behind and rejoin the brotherhood of men. *Androphilia* is a challenge to embrace masculinity without compromise, to live up to a masculine ideal, to truly seek out and learn what it means to be a man.

Following the *Androphilia* manifesto, I've included an essay that addresses the unavoidable issue of same-sex marriage. "Agreements Between Men" is a brief sketch of my personal convictions on same-sex marriage, and is not meant to be read as part of the manifesto. As a potential candidate for such a union, I've wrestled a great deal with the idea of marriage over the past few years. While I do appreciate the arguments of others, my stance against same-sex marriage has only become more resolute. That position is informed by both a principled idealism and what I see as an aesthetic conflict between the tradition of marriage and a bond shared between men. I do not expect all those who would call themselves *androphiles* to share this view.

Given the overwhelming proliferation of politically motivated pro-same-sex-marriage propaganda flooding the market today, "Agreements Between Men" is intended primarily as a record of dissent. The public has been led to believe that all homosexuals support the fight for same-sex marriage, and that is simply not the case.

—Portland, Oregon

August 2006

ANDROPHILIA: A MANIFESTO

"Men may seem detestable as joint stock-companies and nations; knaves, fools, and murderers there may be; men may have mean and meagre faces; but man, in the ideal, is so noble and so sparkling, such a grand and glowing creature, that over any ignominious blemish in him all his fellows should run to throw their costliest robes."

- Herman Melville, Moby Dick

"Isn't there any romance or adventure in the world, without having a flapper in it?"

- from King Kong (1933)

GAY IS DEAD (Or At Least It's Dead to Me)

I am not gay.

I am a man who loves men, and I'm comfortable with that. In fact, my love of men and masculinity is one of the daily, simple pleasures of my existence. When gays implore others to believe that they would be heterosexual if only they could, I'd suggest they just *try harder*. Living a straight lifestyle to please others certainly isn't impossible. People who've experienced same-sex attractions have been suppressing those desires to keep up appearances or to save their own necks for thousands of years. Sex with the opposite sex is still sex, and it's not all bad. Sometimes it's even fun. I've had a go at it myself a handful of times. If I had to choose between sex with women and no sex at all, sex with women would get the job done. There is a certain beauty in the timeless dynamic between a husband, a wife, and the children they've conceived together. If I wanted that for myself, I feel confident that I could find a nice girl and live that life. But I am fortunate enough to live in an age of relative tolerance, where I am free to live the life I choose with minimal inconveniences. I favor men, and I have chosen to live with and love another man. That is my preference and my pleasure. I wouldn't trade it away for the shallow comfort offered by the saline drip of an ego-affirming sense of normalcy.

No, this is not another maudlin homosexual apologia or a plea for approval. I don't require approval or acceptance; I simply require tolerance and freedom from governmental involvement in my private affairs. A generation of gay advocates who came before me worked for the social tolerance and freedom from persecution that I've enjoyed throughout my adult life. I happily thank them for that. But this freedom came with quite a bit of baggage. Rather than carry that baggage and hand it off to the next generation, I've chosen to lighten the load for myself and perhaps for other men of a particular bent who find that the gay identity has little to do with *their* identities as men.

I am not gay, and while I do experience a sense of camaraderie with *some* men who identify as gay, I reject membership in what is known as the gay community—which today seems to include almost anyone who doesn't have husband-on-wife sex in the missionary position with the lights out.

I am not gay because the word *gay* connotes so much more than same-sex desire.

The word *gay* describes a whole cultural and political movement that promotes anti-male feminism, victim mentality, and leftist politics. As a man, why should I treat men as oppressors and masculinity as a universal evil? Why must I constantly think of myself as a struggling minority when I'm doing fine? And what does socialism have to do with who I think is hot?

Gay stands for the notion that sexuality engenders ethnicity and complete social identity. I

have virtually nothing in common with most members of a gay community that includes lesbians, queens, and transsexuals of all religions, nationalities, and races. They are not my *family*. They are not *my people*. Why should I identify more closely with a lesbian folk singer than with other men my age who share my interests?

I strongly identify as a man. I value masculine qualities in myself and in the men around me. In my adult life, I've found that I am most comfortable among other men, regardless of their sexual proclivities. I've developed a profound respect for men and for much of what men have aspired to and achieved throughout history. The culture of men is my shared heritage, and I am proud to be a man—as much as one can be proud of one's gender. I am an unrepentant masculinist.

Gay culture embraces and promotes effeminacy. The phrase 'gay man' implies effeminacy. As a deterrent, opponents of homosexuality have attributed a stigma of innate femininity to all men who engage in sex acts with other men. To be sure, effeminate subcultures have existed throughout history and those males generally expressed homosexual desires. But there have always also been those who enjoyed sex with men but who were essentially no less masculine than their straight peers. Today, homosexual acts are no longer a grave offense, but this stigma remains, and effeminates are the predominate figures in gay culture. While those who truly find this culture appealing should feel free to do as they please, why would a masculine- identified guy want to call himself gay? Why would he put himself in the position of having to defy the well-established stereotype openly celebrated by gay culture and inextricably linked to it in the popular mind? What does he gain by associating himself with those whose values run contrary to his own?

The insistence by essentialist gay advocates that homosexuality is absolutely innate and inflexible, combined with their celebration of effeminacy, has actually fostered the perception of a mutually exclusive relationship between masculinity and same-sex desire. Straight men police their behaviors, interests, career choices and interactions with other men to avoid being perceived as something they are simply not. Likewise, men who prefer men are expected to shy away from traditionally masculine pursuits, and are encouraged by gay peers to express their 'gayness.' Such a man who defies the clichéd expectations attributed to his sexuality is surprising— even disconcerting—to straights and is often identified as self-loathing or in some way repressed by gays.

This black-and-white division between what homosexual men can do and what heterosexual men can do is stifling, restrictive, and counterproductive for all men. It is especially counterproductive for same-sex-oriented men who are not particularly effeminate, because it encourages them to become absorbed in gay superficiality and fascination with passing fashions ('fashionation?') while discouraging masculine interests which men may find more satisfying in the long term. Men like the things men like for a reason; one can only have so many cocktail hours and make snide remarks about pop culture for so long before life becomes monotonous. It's hardly surprising many gay men are popping antidepressants with their apple martinis, or turning to methamphetamines to make life more 'exciting.'

Further, a feminist disdain for 'the construct of masculinity,' widespread in the gay world,

may actually cheat men out of a masculine value system that has historically been proven to bring out some of men's best qualities. Men who are often single for a significant part of their lives could benefit greatly by championing self-reliance and personal responsibility over perpetual victimhood, and blaming society for their predicaments. It may also prove a cheaper and more effective guard against the spread of disease than the glamorized, affirming, nonjudgmental, velvet-gloved finger wagging of the average anti-AIDS ad campaign. Perhaps holding personal achievement higher than the self-congratulatory, therapy-induced 'emotional survivor' mentality that holds sway over the gay community might actually be a good thing. And the concept of masculine honor, when not taken to self-destructive extremes, might prove a welcome change of pace from a community known for incessant gossip and henhouse bitchiness.

Without the shared threat of physical persecution, there is little reason for the quasi-religious solidarity that gay advocates demand of all those with same-sex interests, gender issues and whomever else they've huddled under the gay umbrella. The goals of today's gay advocates—hate crime and anti-discrimination legislation, politically correct thought-policing, same-sex marriage and adoption 'rights,' and support for completely unrelated leftist causes are contentious at best. They are dubious wants, not the dire injustices faced by previous generations.

The time has come for masculine men who love men to break away from a politically charged gay community that does not represent their interests or values. It is time for us to wipe away the age-old smear of effeminacy by rejecting the divisive, limiting gay identity, and to reclaim our rightful place among the brotherhood of men. In this age of tolerance, there is ample opportunity for those critical of gay culture to found a new subculture based on masculinity, not as a mere subset of gay culture but in tribute to the rich history of masculine culture itself. Emboldened and inspired by time-tested masculine values, it is in this way that we can reach our true potential as men and earn the respect and admiration of our male peers.

The first step is to recognize homosexual attraction as a variation in desire, rather than indicating a different kind of man. It is crucial to understand that we are men *first*, instead of allowing ourselves to be defined by our sexual desire. I call this desire *androphilia*—literally, 'the love of men,' but in this context also a broader love of what men embody, of masculinity itself. I will use this term to distinguish my own attraction to men from the culture and politics associated with the gay identity.

I am not gay.

If I was ever truly a member of the gay community— something I doubted even when I traveled in gay circles—I terminate that membership now. I refuse to be counted among them. This manifesto stands as a record of my dissent.

Gay is dead. Or at least it's dead to me. I'm just a man who loves men.

I am an *androphile*.

"Androphilia" - Sexuality As Preference

All men appreciate masculinity in other men. They appreciate men who are manly, who embody what it means to be a man. They admire and look up to men who are powerful, accomplished or assertive. They affectionately take note of masculine qualities in other men and celebrate them. Men respectfully acknowledge another man's impressive size or build, note a fierce handshake, or take a friendly interest in his facial hair. A man who is known as a man's man, who behaves in an exceedingly masculine way and who exhibits an unfaltering confidence in his own masculinity is likely to be esteemed and universally welcomed by other men. Sportscasters and fans speak lovingly of the bodies and miraculous abilities of their shared heroes. Men enthusiastically ape the macho postures and quote the catch phrases associated with their favorite masculine cinematic gods and entertainers, from John Wayne and James Bond to Al Pacino and Robert De Niro. While straight men would rather not discuss it because they don't want to be perceived as latent homosexuals, they do regularly admire one another's bodies at the gym or at sporting events. Straight men are not blind; those who are secure in their sexuality can and do appreciate a good-looking fella. I've even had private, frank discussions with straight men who spoke rather reverently about other men's cocks. I don't mean to suggest that this admiration is always sexual; it usually isn't. But admiring masculinity in other males is part of being male.

The prefix *andro* means male; it comes from the Greek word *anêr*, which describes an adult male in the prime of his life. The suffix *philia* can mean a friendly love or appreciation. In some platonic sense, many men are *androphiles*. They appreciate masculinity the way audiophiles appreciate music.

However, the more common usage of *philia* implies an unusual, sexual love. Women could be considered *androphiles*, but a female affinity for men is the norm—it's hardly unusual or even notable. I'm using *androphilia* here to describe a sexual love and appreciation for men as it is experienced by males. The term *androphilia* is not new; sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld used it a century ago to distinguish those males who preferred men in the prime of their lives from those who preferred adolescent males and aged men. It is currently used by some to specifically discuss objects of sexual desire in the confusing world of transsexuality, where lines of gender are blurred. This usage is rare; the word *androphile* isn't even found in most modern dictionaries. As such, it's a word easily appropriated.

Homosexuality is an exceedingly broad term that includes sexual relations between any people of the same gender. While it is most often used today in the context of adult relations, it can also refer to pedophilic and pederastic relations between members of the same sex. True pederasty is alien to me, and I find true pedophilia repulsive—as do most other sane adults.

Androphilia is specific. It refers only to the love of adult men. And although gays have dissociated themselves from many conceptual and cultural aspects of masculinity, I believe that loving men means loving masculinity in some sense. I once wrote that "there is no such thing as high-fashion homo porn," because no matter how effeminate gay men are, their sexuality is generally focused on a love of particularly masculine men. It is rare to see homo porn where males are glammed up, stripping out of high-fashion gear or *intentionally fagging* out. There's not much of a market for it. The most prevalent homo porn has always shown brawny studs or 'regular guys' with a variety of body types stripping out of uniforms, blue-collar clothes and sports gear. Gay culture celebrates queeniness, but gay porn is almost exclusively a celebration of hypermasculinity. Currently, one of the most popular forms of porn is what I call *straightsploitation*, wherein ostensibly straight guys are paid large sums to perform for a homosexual audience. This is not a new phenomenon; some of the earliest photographic homo porn, specifically magazines like *Physique Pictorial*, depicted young oiled-up straight guys flexing, wrestling or posing like gladiators and strongmen. Gays may act like girls, but their sexual fantasies most frequently involve men who are masculine. Porn is carnal truth. The hypermasculine porn that homos pay to jack off to reveals more about their true collective sexual desires than any skewed sociological studies or politically correct protests to the contrary ever will.

I initially intended to present *androphilia* as a masculinity fetish. In many ways, that's how I see it. But I found that the word 'fetish,' for many masculine-identified homos, seems to evoke something superficial or trivial. *Androphilia is* not something as surface as a uniform fetish. A true love of men involves more than a fetish for men's uniforms or muscles or body hair or macho posturing. *Androphilia* is more profound. I don't *just* appreciate men's bodies or the way they dress.

As a man, I appreciate men in much the same way that straight men appreciate each other. Where we differ is that my love for masculinity in men has a sexual component. I appreciate strength, character and manliness in men, but I've also developed a sexualized fascination with these qualities, in addition to an attraction to physical aspects of maleness.

I don't know exactly why I'm attracted to other men, and despite their apparent convictions on the matter, neither does anyone else—though theories and strongly held, highly subjective beliefs abound. People often can't explain the genesis of many of their tastes, tendencies, preferences or talents. Why are some people more inclined to be Republicans while others find the Democratic, Libertarian or Socialist parties more attractive? What makes people find certain careers or even particular aesthetics appealing? What causes some people to reject religion and call themselves atheists no matter how they were raised, while others are drawn to Christianity, new age religions or Buddhism? There has been some evidence to suggest that there's a 'thrill-seeking gene' that makes people more likely to take risks, smoke cigarettes, jump out of planes, drive fast or possibly commit crimes. But certainly, people with this biological tendency don't *have* to do these things. They are still able to make *choices*. Biology may or may not play a role in determining many tendencies, but experience, environment, psychology and, yes, personal choices are also likely influential in determining how these tendencies manifest themselves in different individuals. The mind is highly complex, and human experience has many layers. I suspect

that men develop or act on sexual attractions to other men for a wide variety of reasons.

I'm not convinced that the same things are going on in the noggins of Filipino ladyboys and Harley-riding bears, or men who have simply had a handful of homosexual experiences. It's misleading and overly simplistic to lump these men into the same group. *Androphilia* is experienced differently and in different degrees. Some men experience androphilic desire situationally, or only rarely throughout the course of their lives. They may or may not act on that desire. Others are exclusively *androphilic* to the point that, in a sexual context, they find women nearly repulsive. I find women sexually attractive occasionally, but over time I've determined that I would rather have sex and form close bonds with men. I'd rather live with a man and spend time with men. I *prefer* men. Specifically, I prefer masculine men. Some men enjoy both men and women. *Androphilia* is not some sort of on/off switch. *Androphilia* and *gynophilia* are not mutually exclusive. Many gays insist that one must 'choose sides,' but I believe this is divisive and limiting for all men. It makes more sense to discuss homosexuality in terms of desire, and in variations of that desire, than it does to shove any male who experiences that desire into one limiting category.

Sexual desire is diverse. Men have many differing sexual desires and preferences. Some men have a thing for blondes while others prefer fiery redheads; some guys are ass men and some are breast men; some exclusively have vaginal sex while others enjoy anal and oral sex; some prefer to dominate in the bedroom and others hire dominatrixes; some like young women while others prefer mature women; some are strictly monogamous and some are swingers. There are furries and foot fetishists, men who prefer certain races of women and guys who dig trannies or dwarves. Some men are virtually asexual. Some are pansexual pleasure-seekers who will try almost anything. I *prefer* sex with men. The popular idea that this single preference should separate me from all of these other men and that it should define my other preferences and ideas—that this sexual preference should become my entire identity—is completely asinine. Yet, this is exactly what the word *gay* does. The word *androphile* describes *only* my sexual preference for men. Everything else, all of the culture, politics and stereotypical behavior associated with the gay identity is excess baggage.

Gays insist that homosexuality is *never* a choice, but this is defensive political posturing designed to absolve homosexuals from responsibility for their choices, portray them as victims of circumstance and appeal to public sympathies. While experiencing a desire may not be a choice, acting on it absolutely is. Today, most people in the developed world are spoiled; they live relatively luxurious, hedonistic lives. When gays claim homosexuality is *not a choice*, what they mean is that they are unhappy living heterosexual lifestyles, and that they are happier when they are with men. They would *rather* be with men. They are doing what makes them happy. I see nothing wrong with this—but own up to it! Do what makes you happy and don't apologize for it; don't pretend you just can't help yourself. That's craven adolescent rationalizing. Be men. Stand up and say, "This is who I am; this is the life that best suits me; it's the life I want to live. This is my preference." Take back choice, and take responsibility for your choices. Preference should not be a dirty word; our preferences shape our personalities.

The word *gay* creates social identity; it is a political tool used to claim minority status.

Gays believe they have no more control over their actions than black people have over their skin color. This is at least partially bullshit, even if there is a biological component to sexuality. The things people *do*, the *choices they make*, are not comparable to inarguably inborn, visibly obvious and unchangeable racial characteristics. The word *androphilia* describes desire; it describes a preference. *Androphilia* acknowledges a variety in sexual preferences among men and identifies a specific sexual preference for men. Describing homosexuality in terms of preference doesn't create a minority status or a special 'race' of men; it allows homosexually inclined men to remain men—men who simply prefer different things sexually. Instead of casting them as victims of circumstance, preference empowers them to take responsibility for making the choices that are most fulfilling for them and that will lead to their own personal happiness.

Frequently, I come across men with more conservative political views or men who value masculinity banging their heads against the walls in debates, constantly trying to explain to others how they could possibly be *gay*. These fellows inevitably make the case that the word *gay* describes only their sexuality, which is a small part of who they are as men. But the frequency of these arguments and the bile that they evoke from the broader gay community demonstrates how politically and socially loaded the term *gay* really is. And if the word gay is politicized, the word *queer* is doubly so. While *queer* was once slightly more subversive slang, used notably by iconoclast William Burroughs in his novel *Queer*, it developed a distinctly radical leftist taint in the early 1990s that is still plainly evident in modern queer theory.

The word *gay* connotes effeminacy. There's no getting around it. Originally, in addition to some early nefarious, euphemistic usages having to do with prostitutes, it's been used to describe someone or something brightly colored, lighthearted and merry. This old meaning is perpetuated in the gay culture through the use of fruitcake symbolism like the ubiquitous rainbow flags. Colors like pink and lavender, colors most frequently associated with little girls, are also widely associated with the gay movement—that certainly doesn't do anything to contest associations with effeminacy. You'd think that gays, for all of their supposed collective fashion sense, would understand the language of color. It's almost as if they *want* to be perceived as being especially effeminate, despite their occasional and unconvincing statements to the contrary.

Today, the word *gay*, like *fag*, is still frequently used as a schoolyard taunt meaning effeminate, prissy, weak or foolish, often before the children using it understand its association with homosexuality. This meaning is common even among young adults who may not be especially opposed to homosexuality. The fact that most openly gay male celebrities are known specifically for having flamboyant, effeminate, prissy on-screen personae only validates this usage. Gays may imagine that the word *gay* only describes their sexuality, but this is simply not true.

Why would a man who values his masculinity, who wants to be taken seriously by other men, want to identify himself as *gay*? To do so is to put oneself in the position of having to disprove the connotations of frivolity and effeminacy that the word *absolutely does* carry. If you're male, referring to yourself as *gay* is a bit like wearing eyeliner: you can get people to

look past it, but they probably wouldn't be surprised if they caught you wearing a dress.

I believe it is necessary to use language as a tool to distinguish between the ideologies and stereotypes associated with the gay movement, and the specific sexual desire adult men experience for other adult men. *Androphilia* accomplishes this. The root *andro* evokes a specifically masculine sense of desire, a Mars/ Mars desire for *men* as opposed to a mere desire for persons of the same sex. But it is not so specific that it refers to only one type of man, as the term *bear* does. I find many types of men attractive, as do tons of other masculine-identified homos. *Androphilia* is a sexual love of masculinity as it is manifested in a wide variety of men. Of course, each man will have his individual likes and dislikes within that scope. While separating masculine-identified homos from those who embrace gay culture and the gay identity, *androphilia* brings together all men who love men by describing their shared desire, but does not create a complete, confining identity that dictates their personal tastes or political ideology.

Gays often complain that they use the word *gay* simply because it's easy to say. *Androphile* and *androphilic* are admittedly a bit clunky in conversation. I suggest the slang *andro* for common usage. It means man, and it has a nice manly ring to it.

Gay Party Crashing

When I first conceived of the possibility of exploring homosexual acts, back in rural Pennsylvania, I'd actually had a healthy history of heterosexuality, having happily been accommodated by several girls my age as well as a few adult women. But in early-1990s small-town America, homosexuality still seemed dangerous, transgressive, edgy. It was a dodgy undercurrent in all of the most interesting forbidden books and films. I was a kid who wanted to try everything that everyone else was afraid of, so I asked a girlfriend, much to her dismay, to set me up with this guy she knew. The sex was OK—exciting because it was new, but it wasn't as if I'd somehow discovered some magical missing component of my existence. At 17, like most guys that age, I could have had satisfactory sex with a sofa. I went off to New York later that year, naively expecting that unabashed bisexuality would still be hot, rebellious, decadent—even scandalous. Boy, was I in for a rude awakening...

On Christopher Street and in Chelsea, as my fellow students flocked to gay events, I couldn't help but come in contact with the same mainstream gay culture that Mark Simpson brilliantly lampooned in his 1996 essay, "Gay Dream Believer: Inside the Gay Underwear Cult."[1] couldn't help it, because it was *everywhere*. In 1990s Manhattan, homosexuality was inescapable. The streets in Greenwich Village were plastered with provocative safe-sex posters. Rainbow flags flew from windowsills and hung in front of businesses. Homosexuality and bisexuality were not only mainstream, it seemed like you couldn't walk a block without being reminded of them! Eager to throw myself into an abyss of sin, I explored the gay stores and the gay bars and the weekly versions of circuit parties. I went to a meeting of my campus' petulant, prissy GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender) student group. And yes, I went to the great big Gay Pride Parade, and watched as the triumphant drag queen RuPaul sang his hit single and proclaimed from his "Supermodel" float that being gay was positively great.

Even then, I wasn't buying it. That blissful self-congratulatory sea of gay conformity, of white tank tops and waving arms, wasn't quite what I'd signed on for the first time I made out with another guy. I signed on for William Burroughs and Jean Genet and Tinto Brass' *Caligula* and rumors about Lord Byron and ancient Greece. Most importantly, I signed on because I actually found other *men* sexually attractive.

I 'came out' by accident when my concerned mother got a little too curious about the stuff I was into. Coming out wasn't a trying, emotionally cathartic pivotal point in my life that freed me to be who I really was; if anything, I remember feeling inconvenienced by having to address it as if it were some 'big deal.' To me, it really wasn't. It sure as Hell is not something I feel the need to celebrate once a year with 'pride' and a big parade. That "Gay Dream Believer" world I found in New York wasn't a celebration of same-sex desire. It was a perpetual celebration of the acceptance of the gay identity. For so many of my peers and their predecessors, actual homosexuality was incidental. Being gay was *everything*. It wasn't a

sexuality; it was a social group. Being gay was freedom rings and a rainbow flag; it was a haircut, a selection of must-see movies and must- buy records and must-go-to events. Gay culture was completely homogeneous, both visually and intellectually. Being gay not only demanded a certain aesthetic, but the acceptance of a set of maudlin sentiments, inside jokes and political ideas. It wasn't just *a* gay party, it was **The Gay Party**—Camille Paglia has snidely referred to it as 'Stalinist'—and I wouldn't have been surprised if we'd been expected to salute with a limp-wristed slouch every time someone played Gloria Gaynor's gay anthem, "I Will Survive."

Despite my disdain for the modern Gay Party, I don't mean to suggest that the Gay Rights Movement hasn't accomplished anything of value or that it was not a successful tool in liberating same-sex-inclined persons from very real oppression.

When the earliest incarnations of the modern Gay Rights Movement were birthed in Germany in the recently enlightened nineteenth century, men who chose to engage in sex acts with other men still did so at their own peril. The horrors of the Inquisition were over for most people, but persecution of homosexuals continued in a secular milieu throughout Europe, albeit with significantly less fervor. Gathering places were raided, and while imprisonment for homosexuality alone was relatively infrequent, police harassment was common and blackmail was

a booming business. Homosexuals were subjected, or subjected themselves, to bizarre medical examinations in an effort to study their deviances. The public was appalled by open expressions of homosexuality, but homosexuals grew increasingly militant. Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, whose ideas about homosexuality will be addressed later, openly campaigned as a homosexual for the repeal of anti-homosexual laws in mid-nineteenth century Germany. In 1897, Magnus Hirschfeld founded the pro-homo

'Scientific Humanitarian Committee,' a name matched in its intentional vagueness only by today's premier American pro- gay organization, the HRC or 'Human Rights Campaign.' Hirschfeld made great strides in his work with law enforcement, but in the twentieth century, European civil rights campaigns took a back seat to the more pressing concerns of war.

Although the extermination of Jews and other 'undesirables,' including homosexuals, served as a wake-up call to the world regarding the sinister acts that unfair, institutionalized prejudices can facilitate, sodomy remained a criminal offense in much of the world after World War II. Harassment of homosexuals by law enforcement and others continued as if the war had never happened, and increased dramatically in some periods and locales. John Rechy's *The Sexual Outlaw* provides a snapshot of the Los Angeles gay underworld of the 1970s. It details how a randy bunch of homosexuals were routinely harassed, registered as sex offenders and, in some cases, imprisoned. These were grave injustices against people whose only crime was consensual sex—though admittedly, many were defiantly having sex in inappropriate and *very* public places. Discrimination against known homosexuals was certainly commonplace throughout the 1980s. Institutional indifference to the AIDS outbreak in the same decade was also a serious concern that had to be addressed.

It would be remiss not to credit the Gay Rights Movement for fighting against this sort of oppression, intolerance and intentional negligence. These men and women and in-betweens blazed a trail for my generation. While I may not agree now with some of their guiding principles and strategies, hindsight is 20/20, as they say. It is not my intent to second-guess their actions decades after the fact. I take issue not with what gays did, but what they are *doing*. My critique is not of what the gay community was, but what it has *become*: a parody of itself.

As a 31-year-old man, I haven't faced real discrimination in my adult life, and the only routine harassment I've experienced was the kind that any kid who is different experiences in high school. I've held a staggering number of jobs in several cities, and have found that most straight men couldn't care less about whom other men have sex with, so long as they are respectful of sexual boundaries and are not overly prissy attention-whores. (Straight men, much like myself, generally find prissiness and attention-whoring annoying in anyone, regardless of sex or sexuality.) The most difficulty I've had with being 'out' at work has been fending off the women who expect me to love nothing more than engaging in girl talk about hair and fashion with them. I've rented three apartments in three cities with my compadre over eight years and we have never had a problem with landlords; they're usually disappointed when we leave. We've never encountered issues with opening shared bank accounts or buying a car or insurance together. Any two people can do those things, with virtually no questions asked; I know a pair of straight guys who own a house together. We've never had problems doing our taxes separately, and I'm fresh out of tears for well-off gays who complain that they could somehow save a few bucks if they were legally married. I have a truly fulfilling relationship with my immediate family. I realize that people with extremely religious families still have difficulties, but religion poses a problem that political activism can't solve. All in all, I'm doing just fine—millions of straight people are worse off than I am—and I've known tons of homos who have far more extravagant lifestyles. Honestly, if I'm being oppressed, I'd really have to start picking nits to figure out how.

And that is *exactly* what the modern gay advocates are doing. The Gay Rights Movement, pushed into overdrive by AIDS in the 1980s, has shifted into overkill. Having achieved relative tolerance for same-sex-oriented people in mainstream culture, and having brought an end to police harassment and widespread discrimination, the Gay Rights Movement has turned to nitpicking.

The Gay Rights Movement is no longer a bunch of ragtag grass-roots activists campaigning against violent oppression. It's an industry unto itself that rakes in millions of dollars and supports thousands of employees overall. The HRC has a snazzy Washington, D.C., headquarters, and the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation throws posh awards ceremonies attended by the Hollywood elite. The Gay Rights Movement has become the Gay Advocacy Industry, and it survives by selling memberships in The Gay Party. Bumper stickers are the new armbands, and they are everywhere.

But what really sells memberships in The Gay Party? What is the true product of The Gay Advocacy Industry?

The illusion of oppression and victimization.

The Gay Advocacy Industry must maintain the illusion of oppression and victimization so that hundreds of thousands of checkbook revolutionaries can believe that they are fighting for their own freedom. But the truth is that they're already free to do just about anything. So, like any movement that has achieved most of its goals but can't just close up shop, The Gay Advocacy Industry looks for new problems, and creates them (or exaggerates their importance) if necessary. The Gay Advocacy Industry's biggest enemy is not the wicked Religious Right, it is the possibility that same-sex-oriented people don't really need them for much of anything. If homos don't feel victimized or oppressed, they'll stop writing all those checks.

I don't mean to portray gay advocates as self-serving bastards and bitches deviously making straights and homos feel bad just to make a buck. For the most part, they're likely decent people who truly believe that they are 'working to make a difference.' However, it is simply not in the nature of contemporary advocacy to back down when things are going well; there seems to be a certain momentum to advocacy of any kind. The attitude seems to be, 'there is always more to do.' And there always *is* more to do, but when the big work is done, only pettier and more dubious tasks remain. Whether these organizations are 'for-profit' or not, they still have to maintain solvency. They are still essentially businesses, with people trying to move up the ladder by finding new ways to maintain or build revenue, no matter what the cause is. When I was a bit more naive I actually sent thirty bucks to the HRC, and years after my membership lapsed, I still receive regular e-mails from them complete with maudlin stories about discrimination and scary tales of the evil deeds of the religious right.

The religious right (or Anti-Gay Industry, as gay advocates like to call it) and the Gay Advocacy Industry actually seem to have a somewhat symbiotic relationship, although the gays get the short end of the stick. Nothing brings in gay money like the anti-gay campaigns of radical Christianists. Likewise, however, nothing brings in money for the Anti-Gay Industry like fear of institutionalized acceptance for gays. The problem is that there are simply *more* radical Christianists willing to write checks. This is why gay advocates, who routinely win in mainstream culture—because most people find gays nonthreatening and are willing to live and let live—increasingly lose their biggest political battles.

The fight for same-sex marriage is the obvious example. Gay advocates have telegraphed that same-sex marriage is their ultimate goal, and that they will settle for nothing less in the long run. Knowing that it's difficult to push gay marriage through legislatures because voting pro-gay can often seem like political suicide for politicians and a losing battle with voters, gay advocates use the legal system and put cases before judges who don't want to look like career bigots. In Massachusetts, they got what they wanted. In a year's time, the religionist right was able to wage massive campaigns, even in more sympathetic states like mine, Oregon, to pass constitutional amendments that prohibited same-sex marriage. One step forward, many steps back.

The Gay Advocacy Industry simply can't whip up enough enthusiasm to finance campaigns that compete with the Anti- Gay Industry. There simply aren't as many homos waiting to get

married as there are Christianists who think the concept of same-sex marriage is perfectly vile. And, quite frankly, I really don't believe enough of said homos care as deeply about the issue. Because, as I said, most of them are doing just fine. Sure, most gays, if you ask them, think same-sex marriage is a grand idea, but many gay men simply don't think of marriage as a top priority. They'd rather upgrade their cars, redesign their houses, eat at hip restaurants and plan fabulous vacations. Who can blame them? I've spoken to many gays who, while angry about the fact that they *can't* get married, have never really even had a successful long-term relationship. And if they have, often their idea of marriage is a bit more flexible in terms of monogamy than what most people have in mind. Gay advocates would probably have a much easier time—because the religious right would have more difficulty generating outrage among its constituencies— in passing moderate domestic partnership and civil union laws that would be more flexible and more satisfactory for a broader range of people.

But that's the rub. Gay advocates aren't interested in practical solutions. Practical solutions aren't what their most loyal supporters want. They are idealists. They believe they are fighting the good fight against oppression and inequality in the same way that blacks and women fought for equal rights in the 1960s and '70s. Supporters of gay causes consistently compare homosexuality to race, and play on white Americans' fears that they are secretly racist bigots, a mere noose and white sheet away from the Southern good old boys of yesteryear. Arguments for same-sex marriage, hate crime legislation, and antidiscrimination laws all hinge on the concept that homosexuality is pretty much exactly like race.

They believe these arguments to be effective because The Gay Party has built its ideology around the idea that homosexuality is absolutely inborn. The problem is that no one really knows this to be true. Gays have gone ahead and made up all of our minds for us and vigorously promoted their 'truth,' that homosexuality is *not a choice*. But the jury is still out in the scientific community, and 'current scientific thinking' on the matter seems to shift every few years. In the early '90s, when I came of age, everyone was *absolutely certain that* a 'gay gene' would soon be found, proving homosexuals to be genetically different and therefore worthy of all of the special considerations accorded to minority ethnic and racial groups. Today, many scientists believe that it is the hormonal environment in the womb that causes homosexuality. But this is no sure thing, no proven fact, either. It's only a theory, one that doesn't hold across the board. It seems that environmental factors and, yes, personal choices still play a role in shaping sexuality. My opinion, from experience and personal observation, is that even if many homosexuals *do* share some common biological traits, homosexuality can also be something of an acquired taste. Sex is still sex, especially for men, and it seems that given circumstances where boundaries of sexual identity are more easily crossed, some men develop a temporary or lasting affinity for sex with other men. Though they avoid discussing it in a political context, most gay men are quick to brag in social situations about encounters with ostensibly straight men. Of course, they will strongly assert that homosexuality was never a choice *for them*. Pro-homo activists have asserted that sexuality was inborn long before they had *any* substantial evidence to back it up—since the very beginnings of homosexual activism in nineteenth-century Europe. Even then, the 'born that way' theory was likely adopted in part because it was politically expedient. David F. Greenberg, in *The*

Construction of Homosexuality, wrote of pioneer homosexual activist Karl Heinrich Ulrichs' purely conjectural *urning* theory:

"Ulrichs's (sic) conclusion that uranians are born, not made, may have been inspired by embryological discoveries as he claimed; conveniently, it was an attractive position for someone arguing against the criminalization of homosexual relations. If homosexual desire is congenital and beyond one's control, one could argue for legal immunity in a criminal- law system that viewed crime voluntaristically. 'They can't help what they do,' the argument went; 'therefore they shouldn't be punished for it.' "

Greenberg also noted that as theories of innate homosexuality gained popularity, many homosexuals became fascinated with the idea and reevaluated their pasts to validate it, including at least one author who rewrote her autobiography specifically to include early indications of homosexuality. The idea that homosexuality is 'not a choice,' that homosexuals are absolutely 'born that way,' seems always to have been more a matter of *faith*, and of political convenience, than of honest or objective analysis.

The strongest serious argument against legal oppression of homosexuality has always been the libertarian one: all adult people should be free to engage in nonviolent consensual sex acts in private, regardless of fluctuations in public opinion about those acts. This seems fairly reasonable to a logical mind. Secular arguments against homosexuality have always been weak, and with growing concerns about overpopulation and dwindling natural resources, should be far less persuasive than they were in smaller, more tribal societies. Attempts by religious organizations to make nebulous secular arguments usually fall flat; fear of divine vengeance has always been religion's strongest weapon against homosexuality. One concern, even evidenced sporadically among the Greeks, has been that acceptance of homosexuality leads to a weakening through effeminacy of the male population. But if anything has made men more effeminate in the past half-century, it's been the running feminist critique of masculinity. It has been women, not homosexual men—who make up a fairly small portion of the population—who have demanded that men 'get in touch with their feminine sides.' While homos are routinely blamed for male effeminacy in the media, it's difficult to see how such a small group could have such a pervasive influence. And this argument is only even remotely plausible if one assumes that male homosexuality and effeminacy are synonymous. I'll take that assumption to task in the next segment of this manifesto.

The libertarian solution, however, has been achieved throughout most of the West. Sodomy has been decriminalized in the United States, and America lagged behind most of Europe in this significant achievement. It seems that if gay advocates today were truly concerned about *real* oppression, they'd be concentrating their efforts on political asylum programs for homos in Muslim countries, where accused homosexuals are still routinely executed or forced, foolishly, to submit to testosterone injections.

No, instead of fighting *real* oppression, they concern themselves with fighting inconvenience. Forty years ago, men like myself might have been jailed or beaten by police simply for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I had a great- uncle who was arrested

on sodomy charges. His full name and offense was printed in the local paper, which had significant repercussions not only for him, but also for my grandfather who operated a business under the same last name. The great injustices of my generation apparently have to do with health-insurance benefits, the 'rights' to marry and to adopt children we can't have naturally, access to pension funds[2] tax breaks, and rarely experienced quirks of the legal system. These slights may be unfair, or at times cause hardship, but the hysterical rhetoric employed by many current gay advocates would lead one to believe the issues affecting today's homosexuals are equally dire forms of oppression. You'd never know it from listening to many gays, but most homos today actually *aren't* harassed, beaten or arrested due to their sexuality, and they face minimal, if any, discrimination. People who are open about their homosexuality today are actually pretty much free to live healthy, productive lives—if they choose to do so. And that's a good thing.

Nevertheless, The Gay Party tells us that we homosexuals must band together to fight against high-school bullies, and to encourage kids to 'come out' and ghettoize themselves into little gay support groups where they can become conversant in Party dogma and avoid ever having to learn to deal effectively with their straight peers. The Gay Party tells us our oppression is a lack of acceptance, which *forces us* into self-destructive patterns of behavior. The Gay Party insists we *learn* that we are victims of heterosexual oppression, and imagine that everyone is out to get us. Loyal members of The Gay Party *know* that their problems are no fault of their own, and that they are brave *survivors* working through all of the issues caused by adolescent ostracism and the hateful heterosexual hegemony. Isn't that what Gay Pride is all about?

To their credit, a lot of gays are relatively successful and actually quite socially integrated—they barely give a damn about the hateful heterosexual hegemony most of the time.

Until, that is, their own behavior is called into question. *That's* when they jump up on their moral high horses and bitch about how damn hard they've had it. How *dare* anyone pass judgment on those poor, oppressed gays!?! I'd like to introduce a lot of them to physically handicapped people, so they can learn what personal pride in the face of adversity really means. How is it that people who have difficulty every day doing the simplest things can so often manage to rise above their predicaments with dignity, and yet gays tell us they can't truly pull themselves together as long as there are people out there who simply don't approve of their lifestyles?

It is this sense of perpetual victimhood, this self-defeating lack of perspective that motivates the most obnoxious activities of The Gay Party. Taking cues from the most misguided feminists and minority activists, gays are now fighting to control the ways in which homosexuality can be discussed. Gay Advocacy organizations constantly trip over one another as they issue public scolds in response to any opinion about homosexuality inconsistent with The Gay Party platform. Seemingly harmless portrayals of homosexuals in the media are decried as 'homophobic,' and campaigns are mounted to strong- arm companies into renouncing their actions and taking a more gay-sensitive approach. While most gay organizations actively enforce political correctness, GLA AD exists for no other reason. As The Gay Party's thought police, they offer a guide to 'offensive' terminology for

the media (the word 'homosexual' tops the list—the innocuous 'gay' is the only acceptable way to refer to the same-sex-inclined) and work tirelessly to revise editorial policies and style guides to reflect a gay-friendly stance. Though GLA AD's motto may be "fair, accurate and inclusive representation," their actions are designed to control debate about homosexuality and stack the deck in favor of The Gay Party. These are no lovers of the free exchange of ideas. GLA AD is a propaganda organization whose implied mission is to massage public opinion and to whitewash homosexuality to make people more accepting of The Gay Party's causes.

A brief visit to any major gay organization's website unleashes a barrage of images—reminiscent of the feel-good stock photography used by major health care providers—portraying gays as harmless, happy *family-oriented* people. Is this really an accurate representation of the gay community? Readers, I defer to your experiences. Is the gay community really dominated by these smiling, freshly scrubbed, idyllic—if nontraditional—families?

Controlled language and imagery are The Gay Party's most powerful weapons in their war, not *against oppression* or intolerance, but *for* acceptance. It is a war of retribution fought by those who have felt excluded or unloved, a war to institutionalize unconditional acceptance through legislation and corporate policy. Gays are pushing the notion, as did blacks and women before them, that it is morally wrong to speak unfavorably about them as a group in any context and that it is morally wrong to portray them in a light inconsistent with their political agendas. This desperate desire for public acceptance is highly evident in the ongoing fight for same-sex marriage, which has always seemed to me less a fight for a handful of practical benefits than a battle for something far more symbolic. It is a fight for governmental sanction, for the state's seal of approval to be stamped on same-sex relationships. Psychiatrist Thomas Szasz put it best in his 1973 book, *The Second Sin*:

"The marriage certificate is proof of heterosexual normality. Many young people need it, to convince themselves that they are OK."

And so it is with gays. The hope is that once they get what everyone else has got—no matter how much they really even want to get married—they will finally be OK. Hopefully, they will even be able to convince themselves.

It is this overwhelming sense that homosexuals are still a deeply oppressed population, requiring reparative assistance from the state to achieve 'equality,' that has led The Gay Party to call for support for (or 'form coalitions with,' to use the lingo) other leftist causes, including affirmative action, abortion, immigration rights and feminist antirape initiatives. Gay affiliation with the Democratic Party is well established and practically compulsory; many gays and gay advocacy groups actively campaign for Democratic candidates no matter how ambivalent those candidates are about issues affecting homosexuals. There's even a bizarre support among radical queers for Palestine and so- called moderate Muslims, many of whom find homosexuality abominable. If the level of acceptance for gays evidenced within the black community is any indication, most of this support is extremely one-sided. Many blacks are offended by claims that homosexual oppression is similar to racial oppression.

Overt, unabashed homophobia—as opposed to perceived homophobia or mild anti-homo prejudice—is commonplace in urban black culture. And yet, as The Gay Party has identified the rich, white, straight male oppressor as the enemy, it seems to follow that all those who call themselves gays should rally behind other victims of his sinister regime. Never mind that many gays *are* financially successful white males.

The gay identity, as it is packaged, commodified and sold to the same-sex-inclined, supersedes all other identities. Homosexuality is believed by gays to be a defining characteristic, rendering all other ethnicities, beliefs or allegiances inconsequential. Gay Republicans are frequently compared to Jewish Nazis. Masculinity is acceptable only if viewed as a construct in need of deconstruction, and only so long as lip service is paid to the feminist dogma often favored by lesbians. A multiculturalist veneer of inclusivity prevails in gay discourse, but gay social scenes are often highly segregated. A socialist mentality prevails among gays, and capitalism must be discussed with a tone of disapproval, even though gay males are frequently the most conspicuous of consumers. Indeed, there seems to be a serious disconnect between who many homosexual men actually *are* and the ideologies espoused by The Gay Party.

It is not my intent to champion one set of political beliefs over another, but rather to frankly discuss how conceptually loaded the gay identity actually is. While the slogan is 'diversity,' that certainly does not apply to ideological diversity. If anything validates the idea of gay 'ethnicity,' it is not the poorly understood experience of homosexual desire; it is the culture and the near-religious belief system shared by those who choose to identify themselves as gay. Homosexual desire has been experienced and people have engaged in homosexual acts since the beginning of recorded history without the gay identity and all of its ideological baggage. While postmodernists argue that the condition of homosexuality itself is a construct—which is itself an interesting topic for debate—the gay *identity is* unquestionably a very modern construct. However, those who are so eager to attack other social constructs seem willfully oblivious to the fact that new generations are being socialized to believe that homosexual desire is inseparable from the gay identity, gay culture and gay politics. In challenging restrictive social constructs, they've managed to create a new one.

I am certainly not the first person to say that the gay identity is becoming counterproductive, or that gay culture, the gay identity, and the need for them are on the wane. Outspoken mavericks as politically diverse as Peter Tatchell [3] and Andrew Sullivan [4] have challenged mainstream gay thought by saying that, as homosexuality becomes less stigmatized, the same-sex- inclined will become progressively more assimilated and will feel less of a need to segregate themselves from straight people, and the gay identity will become less important. This trend is easily observable in young homosexual men who often feel more comfortable in a straight bar with mixed friends than they do in the dying gay ghettos. Daniel Harris, in *The Rise and Fall of Gay Culture*, defined the gay sensibility as a "political response to oppression." I agree, with a *caveat*. What we now call gay culture will always appeal to a certain segment of effeminate homosexual males, as it has in different forms throughout history. There will always be a small group of males who find that something resembling the gay sensibility is most in tune with who they are. The gay identity seems to work for them

very well; perhaps those individuals should retain the gay identity, and they should certainly feel free to express themselves as they see fit. However, the gay sensibility is distinct and specialized; it is not directly related to the experience of homosexual desire. Being part of the gay subculture should be a matter of individual preference, not something compulsory or expected of all those who experience same-sex attractions.

Now that tolerance for homosexuality is widespread and oppression is minimal, the next step in sexual liberation is to challenge the idea that sexuality creates ethnicity—to do away with the assumption that a man who prefers men is a separate, essentially different sort of man, a *gay man*, whose sexuality determines his interests, his politics and the way he expresses his gender. The idea that same-sex-oriented men are not true men is perhaps the most deeply ingrained and most limiting prejudice they face, and it is one that the gay identity only reinforces by socially segregating men into two groups—straight and gay. The gay identity was a *Zeitgeist* and has always been a means to a social and political end. If homosexually inclined men are to truly thrive, their sexuality must be perceived as a variation in desire among men—no matter what causes it. Those men who experience androphilia must be distinguished from those who find effeminate gay culture and the gay identity appealing. It is time to remove the *gay* qualifier for those men who have nothing in common with gays but homosexual desire. It's time we stop forcing them to call themselves *gay men* and simply allow them to be *men*.

The Stigma of Effeminacy

In the sixth century, during his first year as emperor, Justinian I arrested Bishop Alexander of Diospolis, who was accused of homosexual acts. Alexander was viciously castrated and paraded naked through the streets as an example to those who would dare commit stuprum cum masculis—sex with men. Many others followed; castration and public humiliation became the punishment of choice throughout Justinian's reign for those even rumored to have engaged in homosexual sex. Like many of his ideological successors, Justinian offered up these men in part to appease his angry god, Jehovah, and to deliver the emperor's domain from the fiery destruction that befell the sinful city of Sodom in the book of Genesis.[5]

While simple execution would seem to be both a satisfactory sacrifice and a powerful deterrent, the gruesome spectacle of castration is unmistakably illustrative. This particular style of human sacrifice conveys one message with grisly clarity: men who engage in sex acts with one another can no longer be men. Physical castration is literally the removal of manhood, something most men cherish perhaps even more than life itself. Many men would rather be dead than physically emasculated. In particularly macho cultures from ancient Rome to the modern Middle East, men would often prefer death even to psychological emasculation—as evidenced by Muslim outrage over the sexual humiliations perpetrated on men in Abu Ghraib. Being a man and being thought of as a man by one's male peers is deeply important to the vast majority of men; it is absolutely fundamental to their identities. Maleness is innate, but a sense of manhood is earned and proved throughout a man's life.

Manhood is a point of pride, even for men who are not especially masculine. I've observed a questioning of manhood evoke visceral, nearly violent responses among overtly effeminate men, even drag queens. In Madame Satã, a 2002 film about a famous Brazilian queen, the protagonist reacts tellingly to an insult. He angrily proclaims, "I am a queen but that does not make me less of a man...I choose to be a queen!" That revealing scene was all too familiar to me; I'd seen it play out before my eyes more than once among queens in bars and nightclubs. Males may make light of their own masculinity, but exclusion from the ranks of men, when verbalized by someone else in a negative context, will incite a primal anger. Them's fightin' words.

Physical castration has been a recurring theme in the punishment of homosexual acts between men. Castration of men for homosexual offenses was common not just in the Byzantine Empire, but also in Visigothic Spain[6] and Renaissance Italy.[7] A thirteenth-century French code punished a first offense with removal of the testicles, and the second with removal of the penis itself.[8] In the Netherlands, one secular code offered the convicted sodomite a choice between being burned, buried alive, or forced to castrate himself.[9] The choice to accept castration as a punishment and, later, a cure for homosexual activity is especially interesting. Presumably building on the perception of homosexual desire as a medical problem, Nazis sometimes offered prisoners accused of homosexuality a choice

between castration and execution.[10] The Nazis were not alone in this practice; physical or chemical castration as curatives for sexual deviance continue to be sporadically discussed, and are still occasionally employed, in the Western world.

While castration is extreme, the same message resonates throughout Western culture to this day: males who engage in homosexual acts can't be men; men who love men must be neutralized by having their manhood removed; they must become something else.

Effeminates have been poorly regarded, if not penalized, in almost every society throughout history—for obvious reasons. The most obvious is that women have also been poorly regarded in most societies. Womanly interests, fairly or not, were thought to be superficial, even childlike. But men who acted like women were also believed to be constitutionally weaker and generally less able to do the things required of them. This assessment was probably accurate. While there are fewer reasons to actively discourage effeminacy in today's overpopulated bureaucracies, where women and men often do the same jobs, preindustrial societies desperately needed their men to be manly. Work hasn't always been done at a keyboard; strenuous physical labor was necessary for survival. Populations also needed their men to protect them from other men—and they still do. A society of women and effeminates is highly vulnerable. Being a man has traditionally required hard work, courage, and personal sacrifice. It is easy to see how effeminacy could be considered an attempt at shirking responsibility, much like Corporal Max Klinger on the old M*A*S*H television series, who dressed like a woman as a ruse as an attempt to get out of the military. Cultural codes of masculinity are often linked to a sense of honor and responsibility—of pride in manhood—and a man who behaves in a womanly fashion may be perceived to be making light of what men do, or of what it means to be a man. When modern men react negatively to effeminacy, they sometimes seem to be insulted—as if to say: "being a man is hard; I have to play by the rules, and so should he." One can only imagine how much more insulting effeminacy might have seemed to men in previous ages, when being a man was so much harder.

Successful cultures have often made room for effeminates. Men who today might be considered transsexuals or extremely effeminate gays have been enjoyed by other men in brothels or even revered as priests or shamans. (It is notable, however, that these latter revered roles were often contingent on castration.) Effeminate men have always played an important role in the arts. In the twentieth century, many effeminate men carved out niches for themselves according to their interests and talents, and they have unquestionably played a significant role in shaping contemporary culture. I don't advocate poor treatment of effeminates. However, I also don't think it's realistic or desirable to expect everyone to embrace effeminacy or effeminate culture if it is not to their taste. Just as I see nothing inherently wrong with being effeminate, if that is one's true nature and not mere affectation, I see nothing wrong with disliking effeminacy or gay culture. I see this as a matter of taste, not always as a manifestation of some internalized or externalized 'homophobia,' as it is often portrayed by gays attempting to shame those who don't find them as amusing as they find themselves.

The problem is that homosexuality and effeminacy are virtually synonymous in the modern

public's mind. All men who love men are stigmatized as being intrinsically effeminate. Men who engage in homosexual sex are expected to embrace gay culture and are believed, especially by other homosexuals, to be 'girls on the inside'—no matter how they look and behave, or what their interests may be. As I mentioned above, a sense of manhood is important to most men. Yet, simply by acknowledging same-sex desire, men are expected to relinquish their manhood. They must submit to psychological castration. While this may seem like no great loss to effeminate men who never put much stock in manhood, what of those who do hold masculinity in high regard? What of those androphiles who love men and love being men, for whom masculinity is a thing of beauty and value? I don't love men because I see myself as girlish; I love men because I've developed a deep-seated appreciation for men and for masculinity itself. Men fascinate and inspire me. I love them in their finest moments, but also in the midst of struggle. Just watching men is a pleasure; I see in them innumerable qualities that women often fail to appreciate. I appreciate these things precisely because I am a man, because their masculinity is a reflection of my own. And yet, for this, in some perverse twist of reason, I must give up my own manhood? For this, I am regarded as effeminate and expected to entertain myself with girly things? Fuck that.

Why must this be so? Is there some proof that the experience of androphilia reveals me to be innately less a man than any heterosexual man? Hardly. I've met many like myself over the years who were perceivably as masculine as your average straight guy, and who were disgusted with this stigma of effeminacy placed on all same-sex-oriented men. I've observed girly ticks in straight men who were otherwise highly masculine. And I've met heterosexual men who were quite a bit more effeminate than many homos. Yet these effeminate heteros rarely have their manhood called into question, by sheer virtue of their heterosexuality. All of these men are routinely given the benefit of the doubt—their effeminate behaviors dismissed as mere quirks of character. Admit homosexuality, however, and every momentary lapse in machismo is regarded as a sure sign of a womanly nature.[11]

In part, this stigma of effeminacy has to do with a rather simplistic, polarized understanding of sexuality. Sex between male and female is nature's norm, so according to a basic line of reasoning, males who want other males must somehow be more womanlike. It's easy to see how this would make sense to people whose understanding of sexuality is grounded in that binary system of male/female. If those men who love men are really more like women, everything falls into the predictable pattern.

But homosexuality really isn't that simple. This polar understanding of sexuality is inconsistent with my own experience of attraction to men. I experience androphilia not as an attraction to some alien opposite, but as an attraction to variations in sameness. Genet described sex between men in terms of 'mirror' images.[12] No matter how exotic or seemingly different another man is, there's always some reflection of self in another male. There's always some fraternal familiarity, some common experience of maleness, some mutual understanding between men. I recently came across an article in Field & Stream that described all men as being "as alike as eggs."[13]

While I doubt the author had sex between men in mind, in some sense it applies. There is always some polarity between two unique individuals, with one man usually more dominant

than the other in most sexual transactions and relationships, but the polarity is usually far less extreme than in heterosexual exchange. Women are more alien to men, and vice versa. Men are less mysterious to each other. The dynamic between men and women is frequently described as Mars/Venus; sex between two adult men is closer to Mars/Mars. It is this Mars/Mars dynamic that is appealing to me. It's what I seek out in men—not some clumsy approximation of heterosexual polarity. This affinity for the Mars/Mars dynamic is essential to androphilia.

However, in the context of a heterosexual society bent on sexual polarity, it is easy to see how the experience of homosexual attraction prompts the question: "How can I be what I desire?" It is my suspicion that the vast majority of psychological and gender-identity crises experienced by men with homosexual proclivities result from that simple question. When we are all taught that love and sexual desire involve appreciation for the opposite sex, for sexual otherness, it is perplexing for many to experience desire for the same sex. To put themselves in a more culturally familiar context, homosexual males often construct otherness where it does not otherwise exist. A psychic separation is created between the self and the object of sexual desire. It is really no wonder that so many self-identified homosexuals, in some way perceive themselves to be more feminine than the masculine men that they desire. It seems like a psychological reflex to assume that, when appreciating the masculinity of another man, one is somehow different from him and those like him. But this is more a matter of perception than reality.

Perceptions about the relationship between homosexual desire and masculinity have changed dramatically from culture to culture throughout history. Cultural perceptions regarding same-sex desire and masculinity have dictated the social and sexual roles men could play, the lives they could lead, who they could be. While the objective reality seems to be that masculinity varies from male to male, almost regardless of sexuality, subjective realities based on public and private perceptions have dramatically influenced what it means to be an adult male who loves men. People assign meaning to sexual desire, including their own, and this meaning plays a role in shaping their personalities and dictates who and what they believe they can be.

If a culture stigmatizes male homosexuals as being innately effeminate—or promotes effeminacy in them, as gay culture does—when that stigma is coupled with a polarized understanding of sexual desire, it only makes sense that most homosexuals will think of themselves as more effeminate, as something other than men. Even still, many, like myself, simply don't feel that way at all, but are still limited and burdened by having to constantly disprove the expectations of others. If men who love men are truly to thrive, perceptions about masculinity and male homosexual desire must change to accommodate and encourage masculinity in those homosexual men who have masculine tendencies. To illustrate how malleable perceptions about masculinity and male homosexual desire are, it makes sense to examine how those perceptions have varied over the ages.

The ancient Greeks and Romans differentiated between masculinity and effeminacy in men by what sexual role they played. It is well known that the Greeks institutionalized homosexuality between men and adolescents. However, that relationship was at least

partially a mentoring one, and it was so formalized, so culturally specific, and so essentially different from the dynamic between adult men that it is out of place here. Relations between adult men in Greek society were only tolerated in accordance with strict guidelines. Sex with women was a necessity; it was considered the duty of every male citizen to take a wife and produce more Greeks. While sex with female prostitutes was prevalent, so was sex with male prostitutes. Male prostitutes and kept men played an exclusively passive sexual role, and were regarded as women to the extent that if an adult male was proven to be either, he stood to lose his right to participate in affairs of state.[14] Men who topped these male prostitutes, however, suffered no loss of either status or perceived masculinity.

This was doubly true for the Romans; sex in ancient Rome was all about power. Roman men were free to assert their manhood by sexually dominating those within the sphere of their control: women and slaves. Taking the active role with either a male or female partner was a display of virility and authority. Bottoming, however, was regarded as servile and womanly; a freeborn Roman who was known to have a taste for sexual passivity was regarded as passive by nature and, again, stood to lose his social privileges. In both cultures, an adult male who 'took it like a woman' essentially became a woman. This distinction was also made, albeit in a more clandestine way, among American men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when effeminate 'fairies' routinely courted masculine 'rough trade'—apparently regular Joes who exclusively played the active sexual role and retained their masculine identities.

However, roles tend to be much more fluid among androphiles today. While people certainly have their preferences, most homos are at least somewhat versatile sexually. They experience and enjoy both sexual dominance and sexual submission to a varied extent. Does a propensity for sexual submission truly indicate a passive, womanly nature? It doesn't seem so. Many wealthy men who wield power effectively in the business world find release in hiring dominatrixes. I've known of many straight men who enjoy being sexually dominated by their female partners, often involving some sort of anal play. There is also a long-standing joke, apparently based partly in fact, that U.S. Marines—arguably the most masculine-seeming bunch in the military—tend to prefer a passive role in homosexual encounters.[15]

Increasingly, I've found homo porn in which the bottom 'takes it like a man'—instead of like a moaning nymphomaniac, which used to be the norm. Indeed, if one simply listens to these videos, they sound a bit like two loud jocks pumping iron at the gym. Perhaps readily available modern lubricants that make anal sex less painful have played a role in making it less like 'making someone your bitch' and more like a friendly 'sport fuck.'

Many straight men I've talked to about this get homosexual desire mixed up with a yearning for anal penetration, and this seems to reflect some ancient attitudes. The reality is that anal sex is an adaptation; the sex follows from wanting to be with another man. It is rarely the desire to 'take it like a woman' that initially drives men to seek each other out. Anal sex is, at least initially, an accommodation that facilitates just one mode of sex between men. You can hardly blame a fella for liking it a bit. Having a healthy appreciation for one's prostate gland is not, in itself, indicative of a feminine nature. Sex between men doesn't have to be viewed according to the male/female polarities; it can be seen as an exchange of masculinity wherein

both participants remain men. It is also important to note that most sexual interactions between men do not result in fucking. In fact, many don't. As Mark Simpson put it, "At its most basic, most 'rudimentary,' male 'homosexuality' is nothing more than a shared wank."[16] Every man loves his own cock; is it really that much of a stretch to enjoy someone else's? That hardly indicates effeminacy. Women actually tend to be a bit squeamish about cocks. It's men who really appreciate them.

The role a man plays during sex, or whom he has sex with, are poor ways to gauge his masculinity. Guys who have sex with women are accorded their position in the hierarchy of men by their actions and behaviors; what a man does outside of the bedroom is a far better measure of his masculinity. Based on their actions, some of the men who preferred men were still regarded as men by their peers and by history. Homos just have to work exponentially harder to disprove the womanly stereotype. Taking on the role of warrior, in particular, seems to put questions about one's masculinity to rest.

The most famous examples of warrior homos from ancient culture are the mythical Achilles and his boyfriend[17] Patroclus, whom many Greeks believed had an androphilic relationship — or a traditional ephebophilic relationship that extended into manhood. Alexander the Great had a similar relationship with fellow warrior Hephaestion, and the two imagined themselves to be the living counterparts to Achilles and Patroclus. Plutarch famously wrote of the Sacred Band of Thebes, composed of 150 male couples:

For men of the same tribe or family little value one another when dangers press; but a band cemented by friendship grounded upon love, is never to be broken, and invincible; since the lovers, ashamed to be base in sight of their beloved, and the beloved before their lovers, willingly rush into danger for the relief of one another. […] It is stated that it was never beaten till the battle of Chaeronea: and when Phillip, after the fight, took a view of the slain, and came to the place where the three hundred that fought his phalanx lay dead together, he wondered, and understanding that it was the band of lovers, he shed tears and said, "Perish any man who suspects that these men either did or suffered any thing that was base."[18]

It is easy to over-romanticize the Sacred Band of Thebes, and many have, but it is impossible to know for certain exactly what these men were like. While the concept for the army likely grew out of Greek pederastic traditions, it is hard to imagine a fierce army made up of men in their late 20s and early teens. To maintain such a force, one would think that many of the couples were both adults. Regardless, it is certain that Plutarch wasn't talking about a bunch of sissies. The Sacred Band serves as a dramatic and inspiring example of how noble and productive love between men can be when masculinity is not in question, but rather, is encouraged and allowed to flourish.

Hadrian, Roman emperor from 117–138 CE, kept young male lovers according to the Greek tradition, and is regarded as one of the 'better' late-pagan emperors of Rome. Even Julius Caesar is believed to have possibly played a passive role in sexual encounters with men, especially in his youth, but his accomplishments as a warrior and as a ruler made his masculinity unquestionable. The most comparable later counterpart to these men might be Frederick the Great—who likely preferred men and was an accomplished, masculine

military leader.[19] Other, less-renowned modern examples abound—from high-ranking Nazis to a whole generation of men who accommodated each other during World War II. Many men who love men continue to serve in the military, regardless of the American "Don't ask, don't tell" policy. Are they simply pansies in fatigues? Hardly. Author Steven Zeeland interviewed many of them throughout the 1990s, and almost all placed a high value on masculinity in themselves and other men.[20]

In the East, things played out a bit differently. A pederastic mode of relations between men was common; emperors and officials in China had their young male court favorites, but male couples of similar age were also accepted, so long as they married women, reproduced and continued the cult of ancestor worship so important in Chinese culture. While many courtiers and favorites were no doubt rather femmy, many—in contrast to their female counterparts—also stood to gain significant wealth and power to wield on their own, regardless of what sexual role they played. They were clearly treated like men. During the Ming Dynasty, in the southern province of Fujian, male couples often cohabitated. These bonds were prevalent enough there that throughout China they were referred to as nanfeng —a play on the word nan, which means both male and south. Li Yu's titillating pornographic classic The Carnal Prayer Mat contains several sex scenes between its rakish antihero and other men, and there is no implication in the text that any of the participants are 'like women' for engaging in such acts.

The more even-handed cultural response to homosexuality throughout Chinese history was in part a result of the relatively relaxed and celebratory approach to sexuality inherent in the two most prevalent religions in China. Taoism, concerned with the balance of Yin (female) and Yang (male) energies in the body, was fairly liberal with regard to human sexuality. Taoists were concerned about depletion of a man's yang through overindulgence in sex with women, so to allow for balanced sexual interaction, they developed yang retention techniques to avoid ejaculation during orgasm. Because no yin was absorbed from the female during homosexual relations, sex between men was essentially a neutral exchange of masculine energy. This is also very much the way I see it—as a nonpolar exchange between men, where neither party is, effectively, 'the girl.' Confucianism, however, was the dominant religion throughout most of China's long history, and its morality emphasized duty and subordination to authority. Confucius said that sex was as natural as eating, but homosexual sex was considered a minor offense in Confucianism, mainly because it did not serve society by producing more Confucians. As in Greek culture, however, women were lowly regarded and expected to be utterly servile, which likely made congress with men more attractive to many.

The militant shoguns who ruled feudal Japan, like the Chinese emperors, had no shortage of male court favorites. At least half of the shoguns who ruled Japan from 1338 to 1837 had documented affairs with men.[21] Tokugawa Tsunayoshi had as many as 130 male favorites during his reign; one lifelong companion became his chief minister. Indeed, many of these bonds resulted in the elevation of paupers and performers to lordship. Critics of these affairs disapproved not of the homosexual relationships themselves, but rather of the mixing of classes. Sometimes, romantic rivalries between rulers— as opposed to the bloodthirsty religious fervor occurring simultaneously in the West—were responsible for bringing

homosexual affairs to tragic ends. Shogun Tokugawa Hidetada ordered a lover to commit ritual seppuku because he indulged in an affair with another feudal lord. But many of these men who courted men of authority were given domains of their own, and became rulers in their own right, which would have been unthinkable had they been regarded as women.

'Older brother/younger brother' or 'teacher/student' pairings were common among Buddhist monks; this dynamic was referred to as wakashudō. These affairs were celebrated positively and without undue feminization for centuries in Japanese poetry and erotic artwork. Some of these men were no doubt effete, and some were not. Zen Buddhism, imported from China in 1236 CE, seemingly carried with it some philosophical conflicts with regard to homosexual relations, but wakashudō was already so popular among monks of other sects that the third precept, requiring Buddhists to abstain from 'going the wrong way' sexually, seems to have been ignored or interpreted liberally. The Zen discipline was especially attractive to Samurai, whose apprentices were often the objects of wakashudō. Much like the famed Greek warriors of Thebes, the Samurai and their male sex partners (gomotsu) idealized honor and courage; they often fought together to the death. In modern America, where homosexuals are regarded by many as being too womanlike to be allowed to serve in the military, this hypermasculine mode of homosexual desire may seem somewhat alien. Yet, the very existence of such a culture calls popular assumptions about the innate femininity of homosexual men into question.

This is a manifesto; it is not meant to be a history text. What I'm presenting here is selective, relevant history. I encourage anyone interested in the history of homosexuality to go to my sources. What is clear from any objective history of homosexuality is that there have been both effeminate same-sex- oriented men and those who were quite masculine. Why, then, do so many people insist on lumping homosexual men into one group, attributing a feminine nature to all of them?

As previously mentioned, the Greeks and Romans regarded homosexuals as effeminate based on what sexual role they played, who they had sex with, and to a lesser extent, their overall behavior. As Christianity gained popularity in the Roman world, however, Old Testament prohibitions on all homosexual activity, regardless of role, became more widespread. Christian rulers initially made penalties for passive, effete homosexuals harsher, but eventually extended these penalties to all those who engaged in homosexual acts. Which brings us back to Justinian, who made certain that all those caught engaging in homosexual acts were penalized, regardless of their sexual role or their behavior. Men who preferred men became, in people's minds, one group, who were all subject to the same punishment—in many instances, the removal of their manhood. As the law stopped differentiating between homosexuals, it is easy to see how over time the stigma of effeminacy, once reserved for passive homos or the obviously effete, was attributed to all homosexuals. Guilty of the same vice, homosexuals were all associated with the same characteristics. Though, to be clear, this association was not always made. Active adult male homos were sometimes seen as more predatory than effeminate, probably because they followed the pederastic model of homosexuality and seduced significantly younger males. The key point here is that early Christians stopped distinguishing between types of homosexuals, and grouped them all together.

Christians throughout the West repeated the trend-setting acts of Justinian with vigor and flourish for centuries. That which motivated Justinian also influenced the Inquisition, which in Spain sometimes burned more 'sodomites' than heretics. Everything from plagues to floods to failed wars could be conveniently blamed on the existence of 'sodomites,' who were ritually sacrificed to ensure the good favor of Jehovah— often with a pomp and theatricality that might have inspired envy among the Aztecs, had they not also been trampled by Christians. This primitive culture of supernatural fear is still alive and well; the anti-homo rhetoric of today's hysterical televangelists is remarkably similar to the rhetoric used to justify the purges and executions of sodomites hundreds of years ago.

Most working-class men with homosexual tendencies during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance likely married, raised children and confined their relations with men to a few isolated trysts. Those caught in flagrante delicto were tortured, maimed or killed. Clandestine coteries of intellectual men who preferred the company of other men existed occasionally, but the stake always loomed. When such transgressors were legally untouchable—as with monarchs, favored generals and members of privileged aristocracies —psychological castration was employed. Critics in the know were swift to portray even the most calculating rulers and virile military men as superficial prancing pansies once their inclinations became known. The ancient association of weakness and effeminacy with homosexual passivity never faded from the popular imagination in the West. As all sodomites, since the age of Justinian, were considered to be a similar lot, all were equally abominable, equally feminine and equally impotent. Despite appeals to divine and natural law, for Westerners adult male homosexuality remained an offense against manhood. Those who transgressed against cultural codes of masculinity that forbade homosexuality often had their masculinity stripped away in a final public shaming. Those who others imagined did not carry the mantle of manhood with due reverence were made as women before all.

In the nineteenth century, as science and reason competed with religious superstition in public discourse, homosexuals known as uranists sought to advance their cause by appropriating the stigma of effeminacy; they argued that they were never really 'real men' to begin with. To gain public favor, rather than portraying themselves as men who simply preferred men, they portrayed themselves as something else. In effect, they castrated themselves.

The urning theory of homosexuality was conceptually devised in 1852 by Ludwig Casper, who suggested that preference for homosexual sex was an inborn trait that suggested a 'hermaphrodism of the soul.' Around 1864, lawyer Karl Heinrich Ulrichs published brochures in which he coined the term urning, drawing from a mention in Plato's Symposium, which seems to suggest the goddess Aphrodite Urania was a patron of 'noble' homosexual love. It was believed that Aphrodite Urania was born directly from Uranus (Greek god of the sky), which distinguished her from the more common Aphrodite Pandemos, born of a man (Zeus) and a woman (Dione). As such, Aphrodite Urania represented high or spiritual loves, whereas Aphrodite Pandemos was associated with earthly lusts between a man and a woman. It is perhaps telling that Ulrichs selected Aphrodite Urania to represent his concept of the urning: while Aphrodite Urania maintains a connotation of nobility in sentiment, she is still fundamentally a female who sprang forth

from a male. It's the perfect gay-stereotype image—a woman that springs forth from a male, like a drag queen.

Ulrichs' urning was not a true man, but rather a man with a woman's soul. He was supposedly unable to copulate with women, and it was his nature (as someone who was a woman on the inside) to seek out the male body. The argument then followed that if uranism was his inborn nature—if he didn't have a choice—then it was indeed cruel to punish him for acts in accordance with this nature. In the post-Enlightenment atmosphere of the nineteenth century, the reform of oppressive moral and legal systems was possible, so long as convincing arguments were made in the interests of reason and the greater good. Ulrichs' assertion, on that would have delivered him to the stake a century or so before, now evoked some public sympathy. The homosexual man was no longer a man with unusual tastes, but a different breed of person altogether. A fair and rational society, it was theorized during the Enlightenment, should not punish or ostracize a person simply for being born 'different.' Does this sound familiar? It should, because it is the favored rationale of The Gay Party today, despite the fact that in the course of the century-and-a-half that followed, scientific evidence to back this theory remains spotty and inconclusive at best.

Magnus Hirschfeld, who could be called the father of the modern Gay Rights Movement (though the term gay was not adopted by homophile activists until many years later, in America), also realized the political potential of this position. As a doctor, he set about proving the theory by 'studying' known homosexuals and eventually became known as something of an expert on uranism; he was often called to testify in legal hearings when suspicion of homosexuality was involved in a case. He made the theory of uranism the central argument of his campaign against Paragraph 175, the portion of the German criminal code that criminalized homosexuality. Hirschfeld very nearly achieved victory, though his progress was stifled as Nazi influence in Germany grew. However, due to his influence, many medical professionals began to consider the theory of uranism. The groundwork was laid for the acceptance of both the notion that homosexuality is an innate natural affliction, and the notion that a man who experiences same-sex desire is a distinctly different sort of man—a man who is a woman inside, from the moment of his birth.

Hirschfeld's ideas were not without their detractors, even among men with homosexual tastes. Adolf Brand, initially a supporter of Hirschfeld's organization, the Scientific Humanitarian Committee, took a marked dislike to Hirschfeld's key strategy—medicalizing homosexuality and advancing the emasculating theory of uranism. Brand and his associates instead took a more principled, rather than pragmatic, position.

In Brand's trailblazing magazine *Der Eigene,* writers denounced the theory of uranism and railed against the religious asceticism that was the cause of antisodomy laws in the first place. *Der Eigene* was often heralded as a journal for 'male culture.'

Brand considered both pederastic and androphilic homosexual relations to be healthy and socially constructive forms of male bonding. For Brand, homosexuality was a wholesome expression of masculinity among men who may or may not choose to marry women at some point in their lives. In stark contrast to the 'subspecies' of male women put forth by the

uranists, Brand's homosexuals were simply men who celebrated masculinity and who preferred the company of (and, ostensibly, sex with) other males.

Unfortunately, Hirschfeld had dubious science on his side, and the more culturally focused Brand has been written off as a radical fanatic, a pederast, or a misogynist. He was probably all of the above, but his example proves that, even at the birth of the movement for sexual freedom, there were homosexual men who did not consider themselves to be fundamentally different from other men, and who abhorred the idea that they were 'hermaphrodites of the soul.' I've read Brand's work, and I don't agree with all of his ideas. But in challenging the idea that homosexual desire automatically makes males something else, that it makes them intrinsically less masculine than their heterosexual counterparts, and by championing male culture, this manifesto is very much an echo of Brand's initial dissent.

The strategies employed by Dr. Hirschfeld and the uranists were significantly developed by homophile activists throughout the twentieth century. While it is notable that many of the early gay activists in the 1960s and 1970s22 followed Alfred Kinsey's model, wherein almost everyone is more or less bisexual, gay advocates in the 1980s and 1990s reverted to Hirschfeld's strategy and pressed the idea that all those who engaged in homosexual acts were 'born that way,' and gays must be considered a special minority group. The gay activists and supporters of The Gay Party line in the twenty-first century are the direct heirs of the uranists.[22] The new uranists, bolstered by the success of other struggling minorities, continue to scramble, as Hirschfeld and others did before them, for medical evidence to validate their claims. They have created an artificial division between men and 'gays,' who are something else—a race of men who are not-quite-men: gay men. These gay men have appropriated the stigma of effeminacy; and routinely socialize each other to 'be more gay' because they believe that this is what homosexual desire implies in men. After the onslaught of AIDS, the Tom-of-Finlandesque subcultures of butch gays never quite regained the social prominence they had in the 1970s, though both nostalgic scenes and new mutations that embrace masculine homosexuality currently exist. Gay advocacy and gay culture today are dominated by feminists and shrill male women. To accept homosexuality in oneself is now equated with accepting an intrinsic effeminacy, and any denial of this is widely believed to be symptomatic of 'internalized homophobia.' On some level, the gay mainstream still regards homosexuals as 'hermaphrodites of the soul'—no matter how masculine they may be in behavior or appearance. Effeminate gays still take great pleasure in referring to masculine homos with female pronouns.

The real 'internalized homophobia' is the belief that you can't truly be a man simply because you love other men. Over the course of history, psychological and physical castration have been the most powerful weapons of those who despised homosexuality. Institutionalizing the idea that all homosexual men are fundamentally different from other men, and fundamentally less masculine, essentially says that, on one level, those homophobes are right. Gay advocates argue that they are 'second-class citizens,' but they seem to have no problem with being 'second-class men.'

While the modern Gay Rights Movement has secured a comfortable level of liberation for those with same-sex preferences, gays made a Faustian bargain in trading away the

masculinity of all homosexual men to get there. Rather than acknowledging that there are and have always been homosexual men who are masculine as well those who are feminine, and differentiating between the two, latter-day uranists gathered all same-sex-oriented men under the effete gay rainbow banner. Instead of challenging the ancient stigma of effeminacy once only attributed to men who played the sexually passive role, modern gays embraced that stigma and applied it to all men who engage in homosexual acts.

By creating a separate, ghettoized gay culture characterized by overt and affected effeminacy, and immersing themselves in it, gays have effectively constructed a cultural barrier between themselves and other men. By identifying themselves as gay men, homos perpetuate the idea that they are a dramatically different sort of male, a male who is constitutionally less manly, a male who is deficient or inferior to the straight male. The gay identity is so powerful because the gay community invited those who were outcast, who were stigmatized as being different, to accept that difference and see it as something that makes them special and should inspire self-worth. What I am doing here is questioning the idea that they were ever really all that different in the first place.

Instead of liberating homosexual men from the stigma of effeminacy, gays, in concert with feminists threatened by masculinity, simply made effeminacy more acceptable. Since many die-hard effeminates are ambivalent about masculinity at best, and because they think effeminacy is absolutely fabulous, it is easy to see why they wouldn't be overly bothered by this. Many gays truly like the idea that they are not quite the same as men, and imagine themselves to naturally possess all of the best attributes of both sexes. Perhaps, because of this, they figure it's not their concern, and that anyone who values masculinity and who is uncomfortable with the stigma of effeminacy ought to speak for himself.

So I am.

“MAN” - The Natural Religion of Men

I’ve spent a great deal of time talking about masculinity so far—who hates it, who likes it, who is masculine and who is not. But what is it? To an extent, masculinity is universally understood. While many would discuss it as if it were nebulous or undefinable, and a survey would likely gather a wide range of answers, everyone reading this can differentiate between men who are masculine and those who are less so. We can quibble over what makes a guy manly, but it’s not as obscure as it is sometimes made out to be. It is also less extreme than it’s made out to be. The first examples of masculine men that come to mind might be cops or soldiers or athletes. But I just took my morning walk to the store, and while I saw masculinity embodied in the construction worker purposefully grabbing tools out of his truck, I also recognized masculinity in the grocery-store shift manager and some kid barely out of school.

People reach for those extreme examples of manliness because masculinity is not just a quality shared by many men, but also an ideal to which men collectively aspire. Masculinity is a religion, one that naturally resonates with the condition of maleness. Worship takes place at sports arenas, during action films, in adventure novels and history books, in frat houses, in hunting lodges. If there’s nothing essentially different about men and women, why are so many men drawn to these things? Why do men find these things so satisfying?

Steven E. Rhoads recounted an illustrative story in his *Taking Sex Differences Seriously* about a peace-loving Berkeley feminist struggling to raise a peace-loving 3-year-old son. Her problem was that he was fascinated with guns and naturally gravitated to them, even ingeniously manufacturing them in their absence, despite his young age and upbringing in a household where the only thing on television was Sesame Street. It was no surprise to me when, some time after reading this, I came across an article in the *New York Times* citing a study that linked the handling of guns to a spike in testosterone levels in men.[23] Another widely cited study has shown that sports fans experience a 15 to 20 percent increase in testosterone when their team wins.[24] There are other studies that have recorded similar relationships between traditionally masculine behaviors and chemical changes in the male body. I’d be willing to bet that researchers could find chemical changes in men or boys after roughhousing, fighting, building something with a hammer and nails, lifting more weight at the gym, unloading a truck, or any number of other activities associated with manliness. I say this because I’ve personally noticed a certain male exhilaration and satisfaction, a physical sensation of masculinity that seems to stem beyond mere psychological gratification when actively engaged in these things.

There’s something to this ‘being a man’ business. It’s not just some completely constructed social identity, as many gays and feminists believe. The things that men like, the behaviors that resonate with them, and idealized masculinity are physically part of being born male. Where ideals of masculinity are absent, men seem to create them in much the same way that

they seem to spontaneously create religion. While the specific behaviors and ideals of masculinity change somewhat, sometimes greatly, from culture to culture, there is a distinct cross-cultural commonality in what it means to be masculine. Social constructionists often like to find some rare exception to the rule to invalidate this, but I'm just not the type of guy who believes rare exceptions really invalidate obvious truths. Just as I said almost anyone reading this could identify a particularly masculine man if they were given a range of men and asked to do so, I believe you could do this easily among any culture that has ever existed, and that the man chosen would be generally regarded as masculine by his peers—assuming there wasn't some transgression of a culturally specific masculine code in his past unknowable to you. This is why I refer to masculinity as the natural religion of men; the concept of manliness doesn't just come out of nowhere—it grows naturally from the physical experience of maleness. What differs from culture to culture is the way in which men develop this religion.

To discuss masculinity effectively, I've found it helps to separate it into three different aspects: physical masculinity, essential masculinity, and cultural masculinity. All three have a complex relationship with one another.

PHYSICAL MASCULINITY

Physical masculinity is simple but by no means completely understood by science. At its most basic, it is sex—the physicality of being male. It includes both primary and secondary sex characteristics, from simply being born with a penis to being physically stronger than females and usually having different body-hair patterns. But there is more to it than that. I've already touched on the fact that men are hormonally different from women; this must have a significant impact on their behaviors and the way they experience things. There is some evidence that men as a whole have significantly different brain structures and natural aptitudes. Their senses are different. They see and perceive the world differently. All of these things are part of being male, and while scientists have found some differences among some men who prefer men, my position is that homosexual and bisexual males are still far more male in the way they experience the world than they are female.

ESSENTIAL MASCULINITY

The body informs the mind. It is the physical experience of maleness that engenders essential masculinity. Men, because of their physical experience of maleness, tend to be more naturally aggressive or assertive. Males tend to respond to certain things in harmony with their bodies. But these responses are not isolated incidents, as they appear when we look at scientific studies. These responses occur over a lifetime and have a cumulative effect.

They shape personality in a profound way. From the time males are born they inhabit a male body and the way in which that body responds to the world around them has an effect on their psychology that's at least as meaningful as social conditioning. The state of maleness itself, in concert with things like hormones and brain structure and male physicality, creates a distinctly male identity independent of active social conditioning.

Just the fact of being born from a woman, but being fundamentally different from her,

creates the sense of a different role. For instance, a sense of being some sort of 'protector' doesn't come only from social conditioning, it develops naturally from knowing that you are physically stronger and perhaps more aggressive than your mother and/or sisters. It comes from identifying with the obviously bigger and more aggressive men around you, and less so with the women close to you—from knowing that you are destined to be more like the men. A woman's psychological identity similarly grows from the same obvious differences between the men and women around her. Gender isn't only something we are taught, it is something we see and experience on a personal level. Differences between the sexes aren't merely something a child learns, they are something a child observes and processes on his own. You can't do away with that simply by teaching children that men and women are the same. Anyone with eyes can see that they're not. Observable differences between the sexes create observable differences in psychology.

One of these differences in men is the need to establish that difference. At the most basic level, it may boil down to a question like, "If I am not one of the women, if I am not going to bear children like my mother, what am I and what role do I play? What does it mean to be male?" We all begin life as females, and grow inside females. Being male is being different; it is the first sense of being different that males usually experience—before differences like race or class are even recognizable. As such, being male is fundamental to a man's sense of self. This is why being a man is so easily idealized; it starts out that way. It starts with recognizing that difference and conceptualizing what that difference means. If you think about men who are idolized as being manly, what they have in common is that they are most different from the way women are perceived to be. This is why the men described as manly are the biggest, the strongest, the hairiest, the most aggressive, the toughest, the most powerful, the least sensitive and the least nurturing. Being manly is being different from women; it means exhibiting qualities opposite from those perceived in women. Do some women also exhibit characteristics attributed to men? Of course they do. Some are quite physically strong, some are aggressive, some are tough, some aren't especially nurturing or sensitive, some are powerful and some are even kinda hairy. But to say that most are would be an obvious lie. Being manly essentially means being different from the majority of women.

It is in establishing this difference that men do some of their most impressive work. Aggression, and its more civilized sibling assertion, are essential aspects of masculinity. The nature of masculinity is active. Being a man, in virtually every culture, requires that men 'go out and do something.' It requires that they compete and establish their manhood by winning the esteem of men, usually by triumphing over other men or women or nature. In doing these things, on some level, men are establishing their masculine identities and a sense of belonging among men. Being a man requires that you accomplish something. Women accomplish many things, especially today, but it isn't required of them to be considered women. As attractive women know well, their womanhood is affirmed, usually by men but also by women, for simply being attractive. A man may be extremely attractive, and thus considered desirable. But if he doesn't prove his manhood, instead relying on his looks, men will regard him as an impotent, narcissistic dandy. This difference in the way manhood and womanhood are perceived is easily observed in contemporary Western society,

but anthropologist David D. Gilmore, who has studied cultural concepts of masculinity in various cultures, makes a similar point in his *Manhood in the Making*:

Although women, too, in any society are judged by sometimes stringent sexual standards, it is rare that their very status as woman forms part of the evaluation. Women who are found deficient or deviant according to these standards may be criticized as immoral, or they may be called unladylike or its equivalent and subjected to appropriate sanctions, but rarely is their right to a gender identity questioned in the same public, dramatic way that it is for men.

A male might be considered manly at first glance if he simply grows a beard—evidence of physical manliness—but he won't be considered truly manly by other men unless he behaves in a certain way. A man must do something to earn his manhood.

This desire to do something, to prove manhood often manifests itself in raw aggression, which has been useful for men but is generally nonproductive in civilized society. Prisons are full of men who were trying to prove their manhood in some nonproductive way. Sometimes, that raw aggression is channeled by a warrior ethic; drill sergeants bring it out in their recruits and these men serve as our soldiers, as they always have. It's also channelled productively by professional athletes. But these are extreme examples. This desire to prove manhood, to actively accomplish something or triumph in some way, often manifests itself in male ambition. There are certainly ambitious females. But men are, as a whole, more driven, and I think this in some way reflects a very male desire to prove their manhood, to prove they are 'good for something' in a way different from women. Ambition is not exclusive to men, but it is a very male thing that comes naturally to many men. This ambition to, in some way, assert oneself has not only resulted in wars and violence, but also in the exploration of the world, our greatest works of art, our most impressive inventions, the most magnificent buildings and the most successful companies. In this way, I see masculinity not only in lumberjacks and Navy SEALs, but also in someone like Bill Gates or America's early so-called robber barons and industrialists. There's a reason why more men than women love repeating popular slogans like "Go Big or Go Home," and "GIT-R-DONE."[25] Men prove themselves to other men through accomplishments that require sacrifice and hard work. It's expected of them to 'go big,' whether that means getting a big truck or being the first in their field to do something impressive.

This brings me to values like self-reliance and independence, which are exceedingly important to most men. Men are, at the very least, expected to carry their own weight. Manly men are leaders, whether it be in the home or the office. A man earns respect by taking charge without asking for assistance. The old but illustrative cliché about men refusing to ask for directions comes to mind. Men also often love their sports teams, but they love the standouts and stars of those teams even more; they make them into heroes and role models of manliness. Men idealize and want to be the man whom my father jokingly refers to as 'Mr. Make-It-Happen.' Self-reliance and an assertive, take-charge mentality are essential to masculinity. I don't care if you're talking about executives or construction workers or composers or some isolated tribe of hunters and gatherers. Being a man means bringing home the goods, whether it means a fresh carcass or a new account. Yes, today's woman may

be able to bring home the bacon and fry it up in a pan—but all of this is not required of her to simply be considered 'womanly.' This may change, but I doubt it, because there is still that essential difference between men and women that is not merely constructed.

Essential masculinity is characterized by desire. Essential masculinity is the desire which grows naturally from the physical experience of being male—the desire to be assertive, to exert strength, to be aggressive, to be independent, to differentiate oneself from women and to idealize manhood first, but so many people use it that I was unable to figure out who originated it. My apologies to him.

CULTURAL MASCULINITY

Cultural masculinity refers to the different ways in which various cultures and social groups idealize manhood. All cultures spontaneously idealize manhood; this is why I consider the desire to idealize manhood essential to the experience of maleness, as I explained above. But cultures idealize masculinity differently, based on their needs and circumstances. Cultural masculinity is malleable, but when groups associate behaviors or even garments with masculinity, they become quite meaningful, because the identity of 'man' is so fundamental to almost every man's sense of self. Many of these things stem from essential masculinity but are not essential by themselves. Chivalry and samurai codes of honor are examples. Others—whether or not you eat quiche or like your steaks raw—may seem completely superfluous and silly; they have no real bearing on how essentially masculine you are, though each will be regarded as a gauge of masculinity by many.

Cultural masculinity is extremely influential and meaningful for most men. It is this aspect of masculinity that makes it most like a religion. Or rather, an organized religion. Essential masculinity is something spiritual, a quality of the soul;[26] cultural codes of masculinity form the doctrine of the masculine religion. Because being a man is so significant to men, things successfully associated with manhood gain some of that significance. When ideologies are associated with masculinity, men are especially vulnerable to a male-specific sort of manipulation. Masculinity carries ideology like fat carries flavor. When some belief system entangles itself with what it means to be a man, the results are sometimes disastrous and other times quite inspiring. Religions, racism, and forms of nationalism are particularly volatile. When being a man means belonging to a group, that group can redefine masculinity for the men belonging to that group according to its own agenda. World War II is the obvious example, with each man—whether Communist, Nazi, Fascist, or a proponent of democracy and freedom—believing in some way that he was doing his duty as a man to fight for those beliefs. Each were heroes for their own cause, and took pride in that role. The Nazis did an especially impressive job of linking National Socialism to manhood; from their youth programs to the overtly masculine way in which they styled themselves. Fighting for a cause that offers manhood gives men an opportunity to prove their manhood, but in many cases just supporting the cause, as with sports teams, offers a prepackaged sense of collective masculinity. Many men 'prove' themselves men merely by belonging to a group or supporting a group cause. They are men because men support the cause. Men have traditionally loved and been admired in uniforms because uniforms advertise that belonging, that cultural association with some masculinized group. Whether we think this is

good or bad in hindsight depends on what we think of the cause itself. Such is also the case with religions, many of which utilize the desire to prove manhood to their advantage; a common Christianist bumper sticker proclaims "Real Men Love Jesus." Modern Islamo-fascists make use of their culture's fusion of Islam with manhood, and incite men to terrorist and even suicidal acts to prove their masculinity.

However, societies and religions also manage to manipulate essential masculinity in positive ways that serve the individual, the community or both. Stewardship, responsibility, courage, honor—to 'protect and serve'—have all been integrated into cultural concepts of masculinity to the benefit of mankind. Cultures shape essential masculinity to fit societal and individual needs to bring out the best in men. Codes of masculinity mold boys not just into men, but productive and successful men who then mold society. Value systems can and do change over time, but when they are ignored or when destructive values become more attractive, men run amok. Urban gangs and small groups of poorly supervised teenagers demonstrate how hastily males cobble together a collective masculine ideal, when existing ideals and role models are either absent or viewed to be impotent. Unfortunately, those ideals born from adolescent rebellion instead of thoughtful adult consideration tend to be shortsighted and destructive.

Gilmore has provided the most insightful and concise understanding I've read regarding why cultures develop masculine ideals, why they create this religion of manhood. He presents masculine ideals as guards against "boyishness" in men, as ideals that drive men away from "regression" into modes of behavior that revolve around nonproductive, childlike gratification:

Regression is unacceptable not only to the individual but also to his society as a functioning mechanism, because most societies demand renunciation of escapist wishes in favor of a participating, contributing adulthood. […] In sum, manhood imagery can be interpreted from this post- Freudian perspective as a defense against the eternal child within, against puerility, against what is sometimes called the Peter Pan complex.

The gay community, by rejecting all masculine cultural ideals, rather than only those which prohibit homosexual expression, allows its males to remain boys. Many gay men never grow past a focus on instant gratification and devil-may-care, hedonistic sensualism. The gay community promotes nonjudgmentalism and relativism, only expecting its males to accept their gay identity and find happiness by doing whatever feels good to them at any given time. Gay culture celebrates superficial pursuits like fashion and looking good, but rarely celebrates potential role models who do anything more substantive—unless they're political activists working on behalf of the gay community. By separating gay men from other men and quarantining them in a ghettoized gay culture, the gay community deprives its males of productive masculine role models. It mothers its boys according to a misguided feminist understanding of masculinity, but deprives them of father figures who will challenge them, demand more from them, hold them to a higher standard—a masculine ideal—and inspire them to become men.

Part of the problem with many feminists and gays is that they do everything but play into

men's need to be men. The goal of many feminists is to bring out a man's 'feminine side,' to make men more like women. They want to neutralize masculinity and make it 'safer.' But that's not what males instinctively want or truly need. They don't want to be more like women. They are males, and they want to be more like men. In a very real sense, I'd link the current popularity of conservatism to a backlash against liberal, feminist-influenced 'mothering' of men. I've even read of some lame attempts by feminists to create school discussion groups where males can get together and talk about masculinity—usually with the agenda of preventing rape. Men don't go to henhouse discussion groups to talk about their feelings about masculinity. Those who would care about these groups are probably not the ones who would commit rape. Males don't look to women or effeminate gay men for advice on how to be men. They look to other men, and if the men around them don't seem virile or manly enough, if those men aren't different enough from women, they'll look to other men when shaping their own personal codes of masculinity. The vast majority of men will always look to men who are manly, who are essentially different from women and who will help them differentiate themselves and form their male identities.

If the 'sensitive' man is really 'in,' I don't see it. I see the rise of Ultimate Fighting[27] as my generation's answer to boxing. I see urban hip-hop culture, which glorifies street violence, crime, easy money, flashy status symbols and irresponsible sex, surpassing other subcultures in terms of mainstream popularity. Instead of wanting to grow up and be cops and firemen and astronauts and soldiers, boys increasingly grow up acting like they want to be 'pimps'[28] —prison-hardened 'stone cold playaz' that make the previous generation's 'sex, drugs & rock 'n' rollers' look like candy-asses. I see ever-more-violent movies and video games. I see SpikeTV and endless sports channels. Male aggression isn't going away. While today's men might be excessively mothered by institutionalized feminism and leftism, they are still seeking out father figures in especially masculine men.

Father figures and manly role models—heroes—make up a pantheon of gods for men. Men are natural hero-worshippers. These heroes are not only heroes in the traditional sense, but heroes of all sorts who exemplify masculinity in different ways. Not just warrior and John Wayne types, but Godfathers and rock stars and athletes and villains and historical figures and the guys who have achieved what men want for themselves. The natural gods of men are other men, mythic or real, who embody manhood in men's eyes. Heroes shape cultural concepts of masculinity; they give manhood personality and character. In the virtual absence of communal coming-of-age rites, and without strictly defined societal codes of masculinity, heroes play an even more central role in guiding men into manhood than they probably once did. Men worship the concept of 'man' by admiring and imitating other men. Men integrate the honor codes of their heroes into their own personal code of honor; the styles of their heroes' masculinity are integrated into the way each man expresses his own essential masculinity. Men are unique composites of their varied heroes—their gods of masculinity.

'Man' is a religion shared by almost all men. Manhood is fundamental to who men are; the way they conceptualize masculinity is the way they form their most basic sense of identity. This religion, through its culture, ritualizes and channels their essential and physical masculinity. Their understanding of what it means to be a man guides their behavior and forms their personal code of honor. What a man will and won't do is more often than not

related to what he personally believes a man should or should not do. Masculinity in its most religious sense can be problematic—but it's not a problem. It's a solution. It guides boys into manhood, accomodating differences between the sexes and making use of the natural male desire to find meaning in maleness. The majority of males will always seek that meaning; they will always want to perceive themselves as being manly. Those who laugh this off, seek to render masculinity meaningless, or to make it a virtual equivalent of femininity do so at their own peril. Men will simply seek out manliness elsewhere.

For a society to get the most out its males, it has to affirm their masculinity in a productive way—not simply negate it. Its male role models—its masculine gods—must be both productive and manly. It must offer a cultural code of masculinity that encourages productive behavior. But it must let them be men. It must show them how to be men, or they will simply be male. And males running amok without a productive sense of what manhood means can be extremely counterproductive—for both those individuals and for society in general.

Toward a Masculine Ideal

Homosexual males are males running amok.

The lack of universal acceptance for homosexuality is not, as it is often portrayed, the root of all ills among homosexual males. Universal acceptance for homosexuality is unattainable. But even if it were attained—if parents across the world suddenly started hoping their children would become homos—it wouldn't solve all of the problems that many believe it would.

Homosexual males are males who have been robbed of a masculine ideal. Most are lost boys without a sense of what it means to be men—Peter Pans who never become men and leave the Never Never Land of The Gay Party life.

Homosexual males don't become men because they're never expected to, because they don't recognize themselves as 'real' men; they regard straight men as MEN and regard themselves as something else. Because they've been stigmatized as being effeminate, they play at being womanlike; but they're simply not female. They take female role models—powerful but often tragically self-destructive women like divas—and identify with them instead of with powerful males. They will never really become truly like those women. Homosexual males will always still essentially be males. And because they're males, they still demonstrate distinctly male tendencies. Fortunately, perhaps because they're expected to act like women and concern themselves with girly things, they aren't a particularly violent bunch overall. But all of that innate maleness—that aggressive, restless energy—seems to find instead an outlet in promiscuous sex, drug use, alcohol abuse and generally adolescent behavior. I'll plead the Fifth with regard to adolescent behavior, but these problems are much less prevalent among lesbians. They have other issues. The problems specific to the homosexual male population are the result of unchecked maleness.

It is a relatively new thing in the West to be an openly homosexual male who is free from the threat of prosecution or physical oppression and, for the most part, tolerated by society.

Because homosexual men have traditionally been beyond the pale of conventional morality, there are no codes of morality that govern them as a group. There's no ideal or model to guide their behavior. Productive male role models are virtually nonexistent. Gay icons are virtually all tortured, self-destructive artists, and most are female.

If homosexual males are going to be more productive and less self-destructive, they need more productive male role models and they need some sort of code of honor, a set of common values, a model of behavior, something they can aspire to—something that works in harmony with their essential male nature.

I know. I know homosexual males are sick to death of moral codes and social ideals. Many

gays believe all codes and ideals are fundamentally oppressive, and at any rate they've long since conceded the territory of morality and social ideals to those who reject homosexuality, especially religionists. Gays view virtually any talk of ideals designed to moderate their beavior as homophobic and heterosexist. (They have a lot of good ideas, though, for what straight people ought to do.) The cliché 'coming-out' drama always tells the tale of a nice boy who tried desperately to meet his family or social group's ideals but who then ultimately failed, accepted his gay identity and escaped over the rainbow to pursue his new, free, gay life with the unlikely boy of his dreams. A nice fairy tale, if you're into that kind of corny stuff. However, no one really ever adequately explained why so many of these nice boys who have broken free from the slave chains of social ideals and conventional morality manage to end up addicted to drugs or suffering from sexually transmitted diseases. I believe that in part this is because the gay Never Never Land is a wild, propagandist's paradise swarming with exotic bugs and unmarked pitfalls. There is no trail, and there is no guide. That may be exhilarating for a few quick- witted, fiercely independent adventurers...but most folks would fare better with some sort of map.

I'm not a particularly 'moral' guy, by the usual definition. I'm not concerned with Judeo-Christian sexual morality or arbitrary, rigidly enforced concepts of right and wrong. I believe that what is productive for the individual is often productive for society as well. I'm interested in solutions that make sense for homosexual males, solutions that will challenge and bring out the best in them—instead of encouraging, as I believe gay culture does, their least productive tendencies.

The purpose here is to reclaim masculinity for androphiles, to reclaim manhood—this religion of man—and adapt it to their condition. Prohibition against homosexuality in men and the deterring stigma of effeminacy are breaking down; they're both malleable, cultural aspects of masculinity. Only the divisive gay identity itself stands in the way of homosexual males taking their rightful place beside men and truly becoming men in their own right. By perceiving themselves as men, by seeing their sexuality as a mere difference in sexual preference and dropping all of the baggage that comes with gayness, they can look to all men, straight men and homos alike, for productive models of masculinity that are compatible with their own essential masculinity. They can look to great men, manly men, for guidance. They can build their own personal pantheon of male gods and mold their own sense of what it means to be a man in the image of those gods, as other men do.

Many homosexual men want to think of themselves as being masculine and hold masculine ideals in high regard. But they find themselves lumped into the gay community, which sends the opposite message—to behave effeminately and reject both masculinity and masculine codes of behavior. If masculine homos do this, however, they're rejecting a part of who they really are.

By reevaluating masculinity and finding out what it means to be men, they may find a part of them has been sorely neglected. They may find fulfillment and direction and meaning in ideas and activities that are meaningful and productive for so many other men. By discovering what it means to be men and aspiring to manliness, they may find kinship with other men and earn their respect. They may find heritage in a history that is suddenly more

familiar than alien. They may find that they become more comfortable around straight men and share more in common with them than they ever imagined. They may find that other men can show them more about themselves than women ever could. They may find that embracing masculinity is better, more productive for them than rejecting it. Being a man isn't a given; it is something proved, an ideal aspired to, and they just may find that in proving their masculinity and aspiring to that ideal they gain something more substantial than their sexuality to be proud of. In reclaiming and rediscovering masculinity, they may actually find themselves. I have.

And so have many other men that prefer men, who refuse to be defined by their sexuality alone. I've met and spoken with plenty of homos over the years who do consider themselves men first, who enjoy the company of men and relate to them as masculine peers, who enjoy male culture, conduct themselves in a manly way and find role models in great men. These androphiles are out there, living their lives independently, not really asking for much of anything from anyone. But because they are on the fringe they are still, to a great extent, men without a code. Many have their own personal codes, adapted from codes of masculinity learned from fathers and brothers and role models and applied to their own lives. That's basically what I'm suggesting here. However, I think it would be helpful to set some basic expectations—to establish some sense of shared values among these men. Not so that they can be better accepted by mainstream society, but to guide them—to help them be better men, for their own personal benefit.

There are some cross-cultural male-oriented values that have proved especially effective in getting the best out of men. These manly values hold men to a higher standard of behavior, make being a man something worth aspiring to and make manliness a quality that evokes a meaningful sense of personal pride. I firmly believe that you don't get the best out of males by coddling them or giving them a shoulder to cry on, but by challenging them. You get more from men by expecting more. And by expecting more from themselves, men become more productive and less destructive. Their natural male drives are channelled in a more productive way. Codes of masculinity are regarded by gays and women as being oppressive—and they can be when taken to counterproductive extremes—but it is in striving to meet some sort of ideal, in trying to become the sort of man that other men admire, that men get the best out of life. With this in mind, I'm going to suggest a few values—manly values—that I believe would be especially productive goals for androphiles.

SELF-RELIANCE, INDEPENDENCE & PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

When someone says "be a man," they are usually encouraging a male to be self-reliant, to be independent or to own up to and take responsibility for his actions. There's almost a universal understanding that a grown man should be self-reliant—that he should be able to handle his own affairs and make his way through life independently without relying on others. There's nothing wrong with asking for help once in a while, so long as it's apparent that you've made your best effort before asking for assistance. Most men are happy to help men who have shown they can usually help themselves. Self-reliance is really what separates the men from the boys, and it's extremely important to most men; it's fundamental to their sense of self-worth.

When the gay community talks about self-worth and self-image, their therapy-induced take on it is far too reminiscent of personal affirmation—in the most whimpering, Stuart Smalley sense. It's the wound-licking of the scorned and defeated. It's self- encouragement for those trying to convince themselves simply to go on, to merely survive. There is a far greater sense of self- worth to be gained by knowing that you have stood on your own and triumphed over adversity without crying out for help or sympathy at every scratch from that oh-so-cruel or indifferent world. A popular gay anthem has always been "I Will Survive." If androphiles were in need of an anthem, I would suggest "My Way." It's a code of self-reliant, tenacious manhood written into song.

Self-reliance is an especially appropriate value for androphiles because there's a good chance that many of them will live life without the support of an immediate family. There's a greater likelihood that many of them will live a substantial part of their lives single. It is essential that androphiles take pride in taking care of themselves and making their own way, because there's a greater chance that they'll have to live independently. They may form strong friendships, but men expect other men to pull their own weight—and they should. Friends who make themselves consistently burdensome quickly become distant acquaintances.

I've already ranted about the tendency among gays and gay activists to promote a culture of victimhood among homosexual men, about how they constantly blame society for their common problems. That's a poor strategy for gaining anyone's respect, let alone the respect of other men. Part of being a self-reliant man is taking responsibility for your own problems instead of blaming others. Everyone has a hard time or gets fucked over by life sooner or later. People may be sympathetic to your plight and see how things might be better for you if the world were different—but you'll never earn their respect unless you pull yourself together and rise above your situation. It might be comforting to believe that society had a role in your personal undoing, it may even be partially true, but blaming society is almost always an evasion of responsibility.

It's not society's fault when homosexual men get STDs or end up addicted to drugs. It's their own. And that will continue to happen as long as they run around having unprotected sex with strangers and taking no interest in their own preservation. Men need to take responsibility for the things that they do, but they won't unless we expect them to. It needs to become part of some personal code linked to their sense of self-worth. It's not a moral issue; it's an issue of self-respect. I have no moral qualms about men having no-strings-attached sex. Boys will be boys. Males perceive sex differently, and because sex between men doesn't result in children, there's really no reason to insist that they conform to the heterosexual ideal and form lifelong, monogamous bonds.

If these boys are going to be considered men, they need to understand that their actions have consequences and they need to take responsibility for those actions. I think it would be healthy to start a dialog among these men and attempt to reach some sort of consensus on some loose guidelines for sexual behavior that encourage personal responsibility, personal preservation and self-respect.

When homosexuality was illegal, it was necessary for men to have anonymous sex in public

toilets, bathhouses, alleys and the like. But the gay community still embraces anonymous, promiscuous sex and fosters a culture of nonjudgmentalism; gays only ask that homos have 'safe' sex. Any suggestion that backrooms, bathhouses and glory holes encourage destructive behavior is answered by cries of homophobia or prudishness.

Anonymous, promiscuous sex—no matter how 'safe' it is—increases personal risk. When men have anonymous sex at a high level of frequency, especially when alcohol or drugs are involved, the likelihood that they will not always use condoms or that they will put themselves in dangerous situations only increases. In many cases, the men I've known who frequented sex clubs or engaged in anonymous, promiscuous sex did so during downward spirals of self-destruction. They were trying to fill an emptiness inside by filling all of their other holes. It's perverse, but some of the most adamant defenders of venues for anonymous sex are HIV-positive. Many still have sex in such places, but the gay community refuses to pass judgment on such men or critique their behavior, and insists that these venues are actually good for the homosexual men because they disseminate information about 'safe' sex.

I appreciate the seedy, sexy aesthetic of the old homosexual underworld described by authors like Rechy and Genet. But sex between men is no longer illegal; it no longer has to take place anonymously in dark alleys and parks and backrooms. Encouraging this sort of behavior is destructive and regressive. The gay community, because it is a community that grew out of an embrace of alternative sexuality, has an unhealthy, even obsessive relationship with sex. It encourages men to identify themselves not only by who they fuck, but by how they fuck, and we're treated to parades of people who take 'pride' in their sexual fetishes under the auspices of 'diversity.' The gay community makes sexuality a complete lifestyle, instead of merely a part of life.

Real sexual freedom doesn't require constant demonstration of that freedom. It is possible to embrace your own sexuality and feel free to have sex with whomever you like, however you like, without becoming a self-destructive hedonist whose life revolves around sex. The gay community advocates 'safe' sex. I'm advocating smart sex. Smart sex is not heteronormative. Being a male who prefers men does not mean you have to have anonymous, promiscuous sex. Homosexuals no longer have to sneak around, and it's time homosexual men got over demonstrating that. It's time they developed a healthier sexual ideal that puts sex in perspective and encourages responsible sexual decision-making. Straight men's sexual behavior is moderated by women. Because male homosexuality isn't moderated by women, homosexuals will have to take an interest in what Camille Paglia called "the custodianship of their own bodies."[29] They're going to have to take responsibility for their own health and well-being. They're going to have to moderate themselves.

The culture of anything-goes nonjudgmentalism isn't working. Homosexual men, as a group, need some sort of standard that promotes productive rather than destructive sexuality, and they have to stop being so afraid to differentiate between the two.

Androphiles should expect more of themselves and more of each other. Men who make responsible sexual choices and take responsibility for their own preservation should be held

in higher esteem. That should be the ideal. Promoting that ideal will encourage more men to strive for it.

ACHIEVEMENT

Achievement is grossly undervalued in the gay community. The gay community is obsessed with appearance, and status is often 'achieved' via genetic roulette, or by what a gay wears, or how he does his hair, or what personal trainer he sees, or how often he visits a tanning salon. As an androphile, I can certainly appreciate a good-looking fella. And there's nothing wrong with wanting to look good. But appearances play a disproportionate role in how gays evaluate each other and how they expect to be evaluated. It skews their value system away from more substantive measures of men. Men aren't held in high regard by other men simply for how they look. Men judge each other based on their skills (what they can do) and on their achievements (what they have done). Placing value on concrete achievement drives men to achieve. Placing value only on how they look or how fashionable they are drives men to drink. As Bob Hoskins said in *The Long Good Friday*, "You know how bitchy queers get when their looks start to go."

Men who value accomplishment are more productive, and tend to become more accomplished with time. If a man's value rests entirely on his youthful good looks and his fashion sense, he's pretty much guaranteed a lifelong decline in self-worth. Focusing solely on youth and beauty gives men nowhere to go but downhill; it gives them nothing to grow into but the stereotypical 'bitter old queen.' Concerned members of the gay community often scold gays for being 'so focused on looks,' but I rarely hear them offer what homos should be focused on. I'll offer that they should be focused on doing something—anything—but wasting their time trying to look like 21-year-old fashion models. The bear community rejected the 21-year-old look, and although they still eventually managed to stratify each other by how much an individual resembled the bear archetype, bears were deemed attractive at virtually any age. That was a step in the right direction. And it is great to see men feeling attractive in their 50s. Since many homosexuals will end up being single at different times throughout their lives, it makes sense to promote a standard of what is desirable that spans different stages of a man's life. But the focus still seems to be on being desired. I'd be a lot more impressed by bears if they stopped holding bear beauty pageants to see who can look the most "bear-ish," and instead became known for their remarkable prowess at chopping wood or building log cabins or something.

Being attractive is obviously something men who love men are going to want to be, and that's always going to be a factor in their overall self-esteem. But men need to focus on more than that if they're going to thrive and lead fulfilling, successful lives. Maybe it's enough for some really shallow dimwits to look back on their lives and say "I was really hot." But most people are not going to be perfect tens, and there's a lot more to do in life than be pretty. A lot of straight people can at least look back at the families they've raised, and derive a sense of satisfaction from the ongoing achievements of their children. Most homos will not end up raising families. And the synthetic opiate of 'gay pride' can't come close to the pride gained from actually doing something with your life beyond simply 'being gay.' By encouraging a culture of personal achievement, androphiles can derive a sustainable sense of satisfaction

from all that they've accomplished in life. Creating the expectation that androphiles, like other men, are actually supposed to do more than look pretty will make them better, more productive men. And it will probably make them happier men in the long run.

One of the main reasons I wrote this manifesto, perhaps the primary reason, is that I see so much squandered potential in homosexual males. I see so many intelligent, talented, capable homosexual and bisexual males who are undisciplined, undermotivated and caught up in the superficial distractions that gay culture celebrates. Androphiles have an uncommon opportunity for personal achievement. While I strongly advocate a sense of personal responsibility among them, they're likely to have fewer responsibilities than straight men who have families. They're less tied down by financial and familial obligations, and they are freer to relocate and travel if they choose to do so. It is easier for homosexual men to devote time, resources and energy to achieving their goals. Whether the goal requires attending distant conferences, conducting research, running a business, heading an organization, learning a new skill, relocating for a better job opportunity, campaigning, practicing, competing or writing a book—men without families simply have more time to follow their passion, whatever it might be. While other men struggle to keep food on the table or get new sneakers for Junior, androphiles can use their extra income to fund their endeavors. This is a significant advantage. Androphiles could become leaders of men in virtually any field with comparative ease. By holding personal achievement in high esteem, androphiles could become more than men; they could become great men.

INTEGRITY

It's easy to get away with a lot these days. Most of us don't settle in small communities where we live and die by our reputations. It's easy to weasel your way out of things, and a lot of people won't hold you accountable for telling a bit of a fib, or breaking a promise or shirking your responsibilities—so long as they don't lose any money in the process. But there's something pretty damn refreshing in my book when I truly meet a 'man of his word,' someone who does what he says he's going to do, and doesn't say things he doesn't mean. And when he can't follow through, he has a good reason—something beyond 'I totally didn't feel like it'—and he apologizes sincerely. That's the kind of man I want to be around and have among my friends. I'll be the first to tell you that lying gets a lot of people ahead in life, and that breaking promises is sometimes easier than keeping them. But I just don't operate that way; I don't think it's conduct becoming a grown man. A man is someone you can count on, who is what he says he is.

People don't expect a lot from gay men. They expect gays to be fruity and flaky and emotional and inconsistent. In my experience, this does often tend to be the case. And I think it reflects poorly on the gays who act that way. It's more unmanly than wearing a dress. If androphiles are really going to reclaim a sense of manhood, they need to value integrity in themselves and others. They need to be accountable and forthright— maintaining personal integrity and taking responsibility for your actions are deeply intertwined. If you're going to call yourself a man, you need to be a 'man of your word.'

RESPECT

Profound respect is earned through achievement, self-reliance, personal responsibility, and integrity, among other things. I've also already touched briefly on self-respect, which is related (or should be) to these values, especially in males. If you have a sense of self-worth based on these things, you're less likely to treat yourself poorly or put your body in unnecessary peril because you'll want to remain self-reliant and independent and continue to achieve the goals most important to you.

What I want to discuss here is a baseline respect between men. If androphiles are truly to rejoin the brotherhood of men, it is absolutely essential that they treat other men with the same modicum of respect that they'd want for themselves. This is not, it must be said, a free pass for assholes. But if androphiles want to be respected by other men, they must be prepared to offer the same respect in return—especially when it comes to another man's sexuality.

I was talking with a young, reasonably attractive straight guy recently, and he admitted that I was the first homo he felt comfortable around, because he didn't get the feeling that I was waiting to hit on him and I wasn't bombarding him with nonstop sexual innuendoes. Another straight fellow told me a story about a homo he knew who always seemed to have a beef with straight men, who was openly antagonistic and projected a barely disguised air of superiority to them. Neither story surprised me, because I've watched homos interact with straight men over the years and seen, on many occasions, both open disdain for straight men and overt sexual harassment in situations where the straight men did absolutely nothing to provoke these behaviors.

Throughout this manifesto, I've advocated that homosexual men see their sexuality as a difference in sexual preference that shouldn't exclude or separate them from the ranks of men. However, this won't mean anything unless homos learn to respect the sexual preferences of other men, as well. Homos are friends with other homos who are 'not available' all the time. It could be because they're in a relationship, or simply aren't attracted to one another, or have decided that they don't want to get together sexually for whatever reason. They respect those boundaries with ease. And yet, so frequently, I see them cross the same boundaries with straight men who are relative strangers. It's one thing to tease a good friend and expect the same in return, knowing it's harmless fun. It's quite another to leer at, taunt and provoke men about their sexuality and then expect them to respect your 'special' preferences. The homos who really get along well with straight men are those who respect other men's boundaries and preferences, instead of just demanding respect for their own.

One of the perks of being an androphile is having access to the private world of men. We have access to showers, saunas, locker rooms, bathrooms and the like. We are flies on the wall, seeing men in ways that straight men would love to see women. If androphiles are to be treated like regular guys, discretion in these situations is essential. Private male zones have to be respected. They have to remain private male zones—not become our strip joints, with homos snapping camera-phone pictures, making comments and leering creepily at other men. By not respecting the boundaries and preferences of other men, androphiles only widen the unnecessary divide between homo and hetero. If homos don't want to be regarded as creepy perverts, they need to stop behaving like creepy perverts.

Respecting another man's boundaries means respecting his manhood, and if androphiles want to be respected as men, they need to respect the manhood of other men as well. They need to respect not only straight men, but each other. Men like to have their manhood affirmed, precisely because they value it. That's why they frequently refer to each other as 'man' as a friendly term of endearment. Treating another man like a man will generally inspire him to treat you the same way.

There are some things that are meant to be 'just between men.' As a man, you know how you'd like to be spoken of, and you know what information you feel comfortable with others sharing about you. Things men do or discuss in private are to remain between them, unless otherwise noted.

We live in an increasingly gossip-driven culture. Women have always been known for talking to each other about things that were meant to be private. Some of the boyfriends of girls I've known would probably break up with them if they knew the things these girls have told me (and frequently, anyone within earshot). Some women are notable exceptions, but most women are talkers, and they often talk about things they probably shouldn't. Even men these days are more prone to gossip; popular sports-news programs are ridiculously gossipy, and the personal lives of public figures have long been fair game for water-cooler conversation. It's part of human nature. I've certainly been known to do it myself. But many homos seem to have no boundaries at all. Many of the most well known figures in the gay community are gossip mavens. Bitchy gossip is a cornerstone of gay culture. Sometimes, gossip is harmless and in good fun. Often, however, it's mean-spirited, or merely revealing private information for the sake of having something interesting to say.

It would be refreshing to see androphiles learn how to keep things 'between men.' If a man reveals something intensely private to another man, or has sex with him, the details of the exchange should remain private. They shouldn't become fodder for conversation the next day with anyone who will listen, and they shouldn't be broadcast in a bitchy manner if the two men have a disagreement or go their separate ways. That's fucking tacky, and unmanly to boot. Oh, I know it's tempting, but that's a low, passive-aggressive form of revenge if there ever was one. And when that's the norm, you can only expect the same disrespect in return. Wouldn't it be better for all parties concerned if it was understood that private exchanges would remain in confidence? I believe that androphiles can and should differentiate themselves from rank-and-file fags by treating each other honorably and respectfully.

MASCULINE HONOR

There have been many different codes of masculine honor through the ages. Some are occupationally specific—different things are expected of a warrior than of a civilian. But the reason these codes tend to be so powerful is because they are easily attached to men's fundamental male identities; these codes of honor become part of what it means to be a man. They play on the natural male desire to find meaning in manhood. Honor codes are most successful when they resonate with essential qualities of masculinity and give direction to natural male tendencies. They give men something to strive for, to live up to, that is in harmony with the condition of maleness. Men will often go to great lengths to prove they

deserve the title of 'man,' as defined by these codes. Sometimes this can be quite productive, as with gentlemanly behavior, courage, etc. Sometimes it can be catastrophically destructive. It depends almost entirely on the code and how it is interpreted.

I'm not suggesting that androphiles be willing to commit ritual seppuku to protect some sort of romantic, samurai honor. Yukio Mishima's autobiographical Sun and Steel is a perfect example of an androphile rediscovering masculinity and a culturally specific masculine code of honor, but I wouldn't want androphiles to replicate his magnificent suicide.

Right now, however, men who love men have no prevailing code, no sense of expectations to live up to at all. Men with no productive code tend to run amok; their natural male energies are given no direction, and tend to find outlet in unproductive ways that are bad for the individual and bad for society. Male homosexuals have remained largely without a code, though I've read of some codes within early gay biker and leather groups, in part because they found themselves on the outside of so many other mainstream masculine codes.

The gay movement has been in part based on the feminist idea of 'liberation' from codes, but these 'liberated' men are often perfect examples of men behaving badly. Without a sense of masculine honor, of what it means to be a man, males merely do whatever they want. The nonstop 1970s orgy of drugs and sex in the male homosexual community is what happens when

'liberated men'—men without a code—run wild. It quickly became counterproductive, both for individuals and for their community, and spread disease like wildfire. What tempered that behavior was not a growing sense that it was unproductive, but fear of disease and death. Today, that fear is less powerful, and the same tendencies are emerging again—as evidenced by the increasing popularity of 'barebacking.' Rampant drug use has never really gone away. 'Liberation' from codes is a nice idea, and there are fiercely independent and productive individuals who develop their own personal codes of behavior that serve them well. But I think its clear that these men as a group would actually benefit from some sort of expectations being placed on them; they'd benefit from having some sort of productive ideal to live up to.

What I've suggested here is a loose code of masculine honor, based on values like self-reliance, independence, personal responsibility, integrity, self-respect and respect for other men, that have resonated with males throughout the ages. These values have been common themes in many codes of masculinity, and they've inspired countless males to be better men. They're productive values for both individuals and the group.

Being a man has to mean something, or it's nothing more than 'gender expression.' And being a man does mean something to most men. Beyond the superficial macho posturing that gays and feminists seem to focus on, there's something more profound that governs the behavior of men—a sense of identity that is earned through adherence to a set of masculine values.

It is by striving to live up to a high standard of manhood, by living according to a masculine code, by earning—not simply taking—the title of 'man,' that men gain a sense of honor, a

sense of masculine pride that is far from fleeting. Being a man is not something you prove once; it's something men strive to embody throughout their lives. There is honor in being a man, a sense of pride in that consistently earned identity that many men experience from adolescence through old age. It's why little old men still open the door for little old ladies; being a man means something to them. They have a sense of masculine honor that doesn't fade with time. It's a code that works in concert with their innate maleness and guides their behavior in many productive ways.

This manifesto isn't just about reclaiming masculinity in theory; it's about reclaiming it in practice. It's about taking a second look at what it means to be a man and applying that in a practical way, for their own benefit, to the lives of men who love men. It's not a scold for homosexual males, it's a call for androphiles to take back a sense of masculinity and adopt a code of masculine honor, a masculine ideal, a sense of discipline that will help them to thrive as individuals. It's not just about encouraging them to think of themselves as men, it's about making them better men.

Character, Not Caricature

It will inevitably be said that I just want homos to 'butch up.' In a sense, you've got me pegged. Yeah, that would be a nice change of pace. But that means something different to me than it means to a lot of gays. There are already subcultures of homos who have 'butched up.' They've grown beards and built muscle and worn uniforms and bought motorcycles. All of that is certainly more aesthetically pleasing to an androphile, but it frankly means dick if there's nothing underneath, no true masculine character there to back it up. Being a man isn't about lining up in faggy beauty pageants to see who looks the most masculine. *Bears on Bears*, except for a few patches, read like a bible for furry feminists. The leather scene is no better. Though I've always found that dark, deviant biker look appealing, for all of the malevolent posturing, a lot of these guys out quickly as peace and love powder puffs competing in a pissed-off pose-down. This is typical of gay culture; gays seem to embrace masculinity only as a pose, as a vulgar caricature of men, comparable to the drag queen's vulgar caricature of women.

Gender polarity is given to extremes. Masculinity is contrasted with femininity or, in men, effeminacy. So, as when we think of examples of femininity we may picture a curvy, delicate, big-bosomed woman with long hair and a somewhat submissive, sweet demeanor; it is to be expected that when many people think of masculinity they picture the extreme opposite. We naturally reach for a caricature—a man who is hulking, freakishly muscular and almost insanely aggressive.

Professional wrestlers are perfect examples of extreme masculinity. Their male bodies are blown up to comic-book proportions and displayed proudly, to awe and intimidate. Their bulging pecs are armor; their arms are not arms—they're guns. They are superheroes of masculine aggression—berserkers issuing macho challenges in barks and growls with vein-popping, teeth-gnashing intensity. When the cameras switch on, they are volatile men about to explode. And when they do explode, their combat is no 'sweet science,' no combination of effective holds, targeted punches or tactical takedowns. Their battles are bigger than life. Their moves are massive. Instead of wrestling a man to the ground and locking him into submission, they break a folding chair over his back or throw him headlong into the audience. Their kicks are flying kicks, their takedowns are smackdowns and body slams. Their opponents are not defeated; they are vanquished. Instead of shaking hands, they stomp on their opponents' chests and stand as smug as silverback gorillas.

Professional wrestlers are the thespians of testosterone; their masculinity is theatrical. If all men were really like this—if these men were really like the characters they play—they'd either be heavily medicated or in prison. But men get a kick out of these hypermasculine monsters; they enjoy them. I enjoy them. Professional wrestlers, action-movie characters, television cops, gladiators, sports heroes and the men of myth and legend are concentrated distillations of the raw, essential masculinity that's a part of every man. If most of us are beer

guys, they are Everclear. Hypermasculine men tap into a primal, aggressive, distinctly male part of every man. And men love them for it. As a man who loves men, I think these men are fucking magnificent.

But being a man is not the same as becoming these men. If it were, the whole world would be one big nonstop roadhouse brawl of feral masculinity. While guys ape these men for fun, or mainline that hypermasculine fantasy every once in a while as a source of inspiration, they usually don't want to become these androgen animals in every way. Macho idols are masculine role models, but they're not the only masculine role models.

They're not real men so much as surreal men. They usually lack depth, subtlety, finesse—they are made-up characters that lack real character. Men are a much more diverse lot, and there are many modes and models of masculinity. There's a richness to masculinity that is lost when it is defined only in terms of its most extreme examples.

Gays tend to reach for those extremes even more than most. When they speak of masculinity and men, especially in effeminate circles, they speak as if masculinity is embodied solely by construction workers, rednecks, dimwitted jockish frat boys, and macho thugs—the same hypermasculine types who are most likely to ostracize effeminates. Gays are happy to talk trash about hypermasculine men and portray them as hopeless dimwits; it's a passive-aggressive reflex that's one of the defining characteristics of gay culture. Because they were powerless against the jocks and rednecks that once kicked them to the curb, gays have frequently retreated to an obsession with what David Harris called the "aestheticism of maladjustment" and imagined themselves, no matter how low their birth, to be part of a "secret society of upper-class aesthetes."[30] The idea that straight men are culturally or intellectually inept is fundamental to the tortured queen's delusion of adequacy. The gay sensibility won't allow for the reality that straight men have been directly responsible for the bulk of the cultural achievements of the human race. It doesn't matter that straight men are often valedictorians, certifiable geniuses, insightful historians, writers, composers, and critically acclaimed artists. A masculine straight man who is at once a warrior, scholar and connoisseur is inconceivable to many gays. If they'd snap out of their gay dream, gays might realize how fascinatingly cultured, knowledgeable, skilled and intelligent many rather masculine straight men have become whilst homos were busy finding the best salons and the hippest new restaurants. It would probably be painful for them to admit that the renowned chefs of those hip restaurants are virtually all fast-car-driving, sports-loving womanizers who also happen to know more about exotic food and fine wine than your average fag.

But perhaps gay men like their straight men 'big and stupid' for other reasons as well. There has always been a tendency among homosexual males to eroticize, fetishize, and virtually deify their heterosexual male oppressors. In adolescence, as sexuality is finding its focus and images are burned into the erotic imaginations of youths, many bullied homos develop a "bully fetish," a love-hate fixation on the angry young bucks who push them around. All straight men become caricatured bullies, exotic monsters of primitive masculinity. This sexual fixation on the straight man as beautiful bully and brute has found literary expression in Genet, and has been filmed by underground filmmaker Kenneth Anger. Fireworks

(1947) is a dream sequence wherein a young Anger approaches an impressively built sailor who is obsessed with his own body and thuggish masculinity. When Anger offers the sailor a cigarette, the sailor smacks him around and Anger falls to the ground in apparent ecstasy. What occurs next is essentially a fag bashing that turns into a conflict between the sailors, who break into a brawl, which Anger seems to love even more. The original sailor then appears to save Anger; he transforms from bully to eroticized hero. This theme is repeated in the more famous Scorpio Rising (1963), which deifies the biker/delinquent as violent rebel god and includes another homoerotic beat-down— with the biker character, Scorpio, looking on as he's compared to Adolf Hitler, Christ, the Devil, and Death. Another more familiar example can be found in Gods and Monsters (1998), as an aged James Whale superimposes Frankenstein's monster and his own macabre World War II memories on a strapping young ex-Marine, creating a potent erotic chimera.

The exaggerated, eroticized masculinity of the potential bully seems to be reflected in the three masculine archetypes most often celebrated by the gay community: the leatherman, the bear and the jock. Both Anger and Tom of Finland contributed to the gay fetishization of the rebel biker as leatherman. Bears can be easily traced to the redneck trucker or construction/factory worker type, who can be seen as both a furry blue-collar hero and a potential threat. The frat boy/jock type is so pervasive in gay culture that the archetype practically defines the mainstream gay erotic aesthetic. The smooth, young jocks of Abercrombie & Fitch advertisements are potentially both beautiful bullies and stone-cold, untouchable gods. Gays may max their credit cards in high-end boutiques and dress to impress each other in fashionable scenarios, but when they really want to get laid, you'll most often find them in casual, jockish clothes. Jocks and their gay imitators have been pulling from the same racks for years; they're imitating each other, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell them apart.

Until the gays open their mouths, that is.

Many of these posers still "walk like Tarzan and talk like Jane."[31] Their masculinity is a hypermasculine pose that's self-conscious and one-dimensional. They become cartoons of men. Their concept of what it means to be a man is based on hypermasculine extremes, not essential masculinity. Gay masculinity is a fetishistic, masturbatory reading of masculinity; it's mute, like a page torn from a porn or bodybuilding magazine. Gays stop at sartorial and physical imitation, or cop a particular hypermasculine attitude drawn from some dreamy archive of fuzzy pornographic memories. 'Masculinity' in the gay community is more often than not a form of drag; it seems shallow and affected and silly—like some Halloween costume designed by the Village People. Many gay men want to look like men, but they're unwilling to try or uninterested in really becoming men. They never flesh out their characters. There's nothing wrong with enjoying a certain hypermasculine archetype, but real masculinity runs deeper than that. This is not true of all men who belong to gay masculine fetish subcultures. Some really do have a more nuanced, androphilic appreciation for masculinity. Many younger homos today lack an extreme bully fetish because they were never really bullied or violently ostracized; many are comfortable enough around their straight friends to understand the difference between real men and those that inhabit the pornographic fantasies of the excluded.

I appreciate men too much to reduce them all to cartoonish, chest-thumping apes. Chest-thumping apes are impressive, even hot, but there's more to most men and there's more to being a man than that. Real masculinity is so much more diverse; there are so many other ways to express masculinity that aren't captured in a handful of popular gay masturbatory fantasies. At its most basic level, manliness is a quality of character that is unmistakably, tangibly male. It's a confident synthesis of physical, essential and cultural aspects of masculinity.

Men can be distinctly, wholly masculine in character without being hypermasculine. Real-life examples are everywhere. Film, however, provides a common frame of reference.

Robert De Niro is a masculine icon admired by a wide range of men. As Michael Vronsky in *The Deer Hunter* (1978), he is absolutely masculine in behavior, appearance and demeanor—but that masculinity isn't exaggerated or extreme. Vronsky is a blue-collar guy who lives in a small town, but he's no dopey redneck stereotype. He's quiet, but not shy; he's reserved, but warm and likable. Vronsky is homosocial; he prefers palling around with his guy friends to chasing skirts, though he does have an eye for Meryl Streep's character. She's someone else's girl, so he respects that and keeps his distance. He and a few friends have enlisted in the army, and after a wedding and a bit too much to drink, anxiety about going off to Vietnam prompts a late-night streak through the neighborhood. De Niro's body is completely masculine, but he doesn't look like a pumped-up action hero or a modern gym-toned actor. He just looks like a regular guy who does physical work for a living.

The next morning, he and his hung-over buddies head for the mountains for one last hunting trip together. Vronsky takes pride in hunting; he values precision and the tradition of hunting. He has a low opinion of those who behave disrespectfully and think hunting is about wandering through the woods drunk with rifles trying to kill anything they stumble across. The things he does, he does with dignity and honor, and this defines him as a man. The film then shifts to Vietnam, where he and his friends are prisoners of war, and they are forced to play Russian roulette with one another for the enemy's entertainment. Vronsky takes charge of the situation, not because he's a blowhard, but because someone has to. He manages, with considerable though never ostentatious courage, to handle the situation and get his comrades to safety. The rest of the film deals with the aftermath of the Vietnam experience, and as I highly recommend it, I won't spoil it for those who haven't seen it.

There's nothing about Vronsky that is in any way effeminate or womanly. He is completely masculine, but not hypermasculine. He's manly, but he's no posturing he-man. He's not a brilliant man, but he's a man of depth, dignity and some emotional complexity. When I think of hypermasculinity, of masculine caricature, I think of professional wrestlers and those who behave in a similar fashion. But when I think of masculinity, I think of men like Vronsky. His masculinity is uncompromised, but it's real—he's a real man.

Vronsky may be a heterosexual character, but it's also easy to picture him as an androphile. He is somewhat ambivalent toward women. His most heroic and honorable actions are inspired by love for his close male friends. His world is androcentric; male camaraderie and masculine interests are most meaningful to him. He's the sort of man many androphiles

could adopt as a masculine role model, regardless of body type or other interests.

Real masculinity often isn't all that showy. It's not just an attitude or a pose; it's about character—real, palpable, unaffected masculine character that comes from who a man is, not just how he looks or talks. If some same-sex-oriented males want to be perceived as being truly masculine, they need to find that natural masculine character within themselves and develop it. They need to bring who they are into harmony with how they look. Androphiles need to put the superficial signifiers of hypermasculinity in perspective. Most guys have fun with hypermasculine imagery and macho behaviors, but it's often tongue-in-cheek; these things don't truly define them as men. Most men are palpably masculine, but that masculinity is far more natural and less affected. They are real men. Their manhood is part of them, not just a costume. If androphiles want to be and be perceived as real men, they'll have to evolve beyond facile hypermasculine caricature and grow into men of true masculine character.

Masculine character is rooted in the firm sense that one is a man and belongs among men. True rites of passage are rare in the modern world. Jews have bar mitzvahs; fraternities and some occupations offer rudimentary rites of passage that bond men together— sometimes despite major differences in background, social role and personality. Rites of passage accelerate the initiation into manhood. After passing through a harrowing ordeal with stoic masculine dignity, or accomplishing some difficult task, like taking down a full-grown antelope, young males are either welcomed into the world of men and 'shown the ropes' or they're shunned completely.

But modern initiations into manhood are generally less cut- and-dry; initiation gives way to progressive socialization. The modern path to manhood isn't short and linear, but long and labyrinthine. There are stops and fresh starts and there are nearly limitless routes to developing a solid sense of masculinity, a real masculine character. Men initiate one another into the religion of 'man'; they introduce each other piecemeal to the world of men through association, competition, affirmation, rejection, and the exchange of information. Gays tend to portray straight men as a one-dimensional bunch, but groups of men in modern society are actually extremely diverse. Each male finds out where he's comfortable based on what ideals of masculinity and behaviors appeal to him, and what interests he has in common with various men and various male groups. He determines his assets and sees how various men and groups of men evaluate him. Men challenge and test each other. Each man determines what kind of man he is, and what kind of man he wants to be, based on information gained during this progressive enculturation. He finds the most personally satisfying outlets through which he can express his essential masculinity and develops a masculine identity, a true masculine character that is a unique synthesis of physical, essential and cultural aspects of masculinity.

Homosexual males throughout history generally remained closeted or bisexual, and as a result were still socialized by other men. They knew the male world, even if they were also part of a clandestine homosexual underworld. Because of the stigma of effeminacy, men who experienced same-sex attractions may have privately questioned their own masculinity,

but unless they were aristocrats, they likely still had to pull their weight in the world of men. However, with the rise of the Gay Rights Movement in the twentieth century, homosexuality as a lifestyle became truly viable; same-sex-inclined males were encouraged to allow their underworld to become their whole world. Upon 'coming out,' homos flocked to gay ghettos and associated almost exclusively with gays and fag hags. Rarely had homosexual men been so isolated unless they were imprisoned. In the gay world, they became clones—actually a popular term for mainstream gays in the '70s. And while the gay world is finally starting to fragment due to widespread assimilation, there's still an incredibly homogeneous gay culture that can be quickly observed by visiting established gay bars in any corner of the United States, and possibly the Western world.

In a sense, the gay male world is just another male social group. But instead of being merely different from other groups, it is in many ways opposed to all of the other male groups. Most male groups offer cultural variations on masculinity; they are sects within the male religion —at times as different from one another as Mennonites and Mormons—but all with some shared reverence for essential masculinity and the idea of manhood. Homosexual men, however, have always been cast as heretics, and excommunicated from the religion of men. Gay culture appropriated the stigma of effeminacy, and gays became bitter atheists—proud infidels whose appreciation for manhood was as distant and disconnected as any atheist curator putting together an exhibit of foreign religious artifacts. Effeminacy and masculinity are as opposed as Heaven and Hell, north and south; they're mutually exclusive behavioral polarities with a strangely symbiotic relationship. Masculinity and effeminacy are two paths that lead away from each other, but they are also in some sense defined by each other.

If a man chooses the masculine path, his innate maleness is nurtured; he develops a masculine character. By choosing the gay path, he never fully develops into a man. He often remains an androgynous Peter Pan, even despite a quasi-masculine appearance. Harvey C. Mansfield hit the nail on the head when he recently wrote, "Manliness is an exclusion of women but a reproach to men, to unmanly men."[32] In response, I believe gay culture is a reproach to manly men. Gay culture critiques, stifles, and qualifies masculinity. It encourages effeminate affectations and effeminate interests. Most straight men are admittedly not engaged in some elaborate quest for manhood; they are socialized into the world of men and develop their masculine character through casual interactions. I believe the same thing happens within the gay community.

Progressively, as a homosexual male associates with more and more gay men, he will naturally be exposed to more gay interests and more aspects of gay culture. He will develop more gay behaviors in much the same way that teenagers associate themselves with a social group and pick up that group's distinct slang. The more gay a male becomes—as the gay world becomes a more important part of his life—the more disconnected he will become from straight men. The world of men will become increasingly alien. If all of this happens while he is still quite young, as it often does for many gay males who explode into gay life upon coming out, he may never establish a sense of belonging among other men. I've looked on as many gay men actually scolded homos for preferring the company of straight men. Gays assure each other that they will never be accepted by other men in the long run, that straights will inevitably 'turn on them.' We're your real family. Like some gay-identity

Gestapo, gay men with a deep emotional investment in the gay community often vilify masculine-identified homos as straight-acting, implying that they are self-hating fakers and turncoats. Because gay culture is a response to masculinity, even a revenge against it, the gay community eventually manages to mold homos in its own image—even if they don't really start out that way.

This is changing slightly today. Young straight men are more accepting of young homos, and homos are less insulated by gay culture. Their range of experience is broader and they move about freely in a variety of straight and gay social groups.

However, the stigma of effeminacy is still firmly in place. Masculine ideals are still, for the most part, reserved for straight men and shunned by gays. Masculine pursuits are still considered the domain of straight men, and there's really very little culture among homos that will, in the absence of straight friends, sustain enduring masculine interests. Sooner or later, most straight couples will end up having kids. Their interests, along with the direction of their lives, will change and they will have less free time. There's a good chance that most homos will eventually be left with each other.

There's really no established masculine path for homosexual men. Everything about the gay community leads in the other direction. There are a few masculine subcultures, but as I've mentioned, they are primarily fetish cultures and rarely encourage active masculinity. They don't require a man to do anything; they merely require him to look a certain way. The masculine subcultures within the gay community don't develop masculine character, they encourage aesthetically pleasing masculine caricature. For all of their visual pomp, many members of these so-called-masculine gay subcultures identify legitimately masculine behavior as heteronormative behavior. But masculine behavior is not heteronormative behavior; it's distinctly male behavior.

This book is an attempt to inspire a new male-oriented subculture, a movement away from gay culture that will develop what I believe to be the natural male potential of homosexual men—the potential in these men that gay culture ignores or actively suppresses. The stigma of effeminacy is ancient, but the time is right to challenge it. Cultural expectations for men are in flux, and have been since women challenged men in the work force. Men aren't sure what the rules are anymore. However, a resurgent masculinism is on the horizon. As long as men share power with women, they will have to make major compromises— compromises that androphiles may not always be forced to make. But men won't allow women to reproach them and dictate their masculinity forever. If androphiles want to be included among the ranks of men in the future, they have to stake their claim now—while gender roles are still being radically reconsidered.

This will require a movement, but not a political one. The meaningless marches, candlelight vigils, and whiny media manipulation frequently employed by gay advocates only reinforce the stigma of effeminacy. These passive-aggressive activities will only demonstrate on the public stage that homosexual men really are mama's boys who can't handle their own affairs, and who will never be able to pull their shit together until everyone else accepts and affirms their lifestyle. Challenging the stigma of effeminacy will require a movement whose action

takes place first on the personal level. Androphiles will have to disprove the stigma of effeminacy not by asking others to perceive them differently, but by living differently. Masculinity is not just a pose, it's a lifestyle. Now is the time for androphiles to start living that lifestyle. Now is the time for androphiles to force people to reconsider their perceptions of homosexual males, not via petition, but by defying their expectations. If there are homosexual males out there who want to defy those expectations, who are tired of being perceived as deficient men based only on their sexual preference, who are tired of allowing liberal feminist gays dictate their opinions and agendas, who are tired of everything the gay lifestyle has to offer—now is the time to take control of the situation.

As a penalty for homosexual acts, the men who've engaged in them have been historically castrated, both physically and psychologically. They have been banished from the world of men, cast out and encouraged to perceive themselves as deficient, inferior, and fundamentally unmanly males.

For centuries in the West, homosexual males have been stripped of their manhood, their masculine heritage, their place in the world of men.

I say it's time we took it all back.

Taking Back Masculinity

What do you know—really know about homosexuality, about masculinity, and about yourself?

Have you perhaps been complacent and allowed others to limit and define you, even as you 'came out' and declared your 'freedom?'

In accepting 'who you really are,' have you actually been stifling a part of yourself—stifling something real, something primal, something unmistakably male?

Is it possible that you've accepted enshrined smears and insults as unquestionable truth, taken to heart the widespread belief that we, as men who prefer men, are flawed men, half-men, not-quite-men, something else?

Are we not men?

Many of you who are reading this have already rejected the idea that homosexual desire is indicative of a defective masculinity. You've carved out a niche for yourself in the world of men and gained the respect of other men. When other men discover your sexual preference, their perceptions about who a homosexual man can be are forever altered and expanded. I've known many like you.

However, many others still have one foot planted in the gay world. Try pulling it out and walking around a bit. See how the other half lives, so to speak.

Call it a dare.

Many homosexual men slip into the gay lifestyle and never look back. They slip into a comfort zone and never really challenge themselves. Being a gay teen might be rough, but being a gay man is easy, especially if you're reasonably good- looking. It's an instant lifestyle. Instant sex. Instant friends. Instant culture. Just add vodka.

Most males grow up sharing some common ground—some common experiences and common interests. 'Coming out' is a fork in the road; gay males start down the gay path and move further and further away from that common ground. Their identity becomes conflated with the gay identity. They surround themselves with gays and women who influence their interests and the way they perceive themselves over time.

People make the mistake of stifling their personal evolution by setting limits on themselves, based on what they liked or disliked as children. Who you were as a child or even an adolescent is not necessarily who you really are or who you could conceivably be. If you had a bad experience with something, or were pushed into something you didn't want to do when you were younger, isn't it possible that it simply wasn't right for you at the time? I've

found that I genuinely enjoy many things as a grown man that I despised as a child, or dismissed as a teen.

I'm not asking homos to repress themselves. My theory, based in part on my own experiences, is that many of these men have been doing just that for years. I believe that they can be more than what the gay community has encouraged them to become. I think that they're missing out on a whole realm of potentially fulfilling experiences that they have been told are not for people like them. I think they're foolishly rejecting masculine ideals that have always inspired men to lead more vital, productive, satisfying lives.

A few years ago, I started exploring the world of men. Instead of merely worshipping the masculine in other men, I awakened my own latent masculinity. For me, androphilia has become more than a sexual attraction to masculine men; it expanded to become a passion for the world of men, the pursuits of men, for being a man, and for living a masculine life.

This manifesto is a challenge. It's not a plea for fags to start 'acting like men.' It's not a casting call; I'm not interested in 'acting.' It's a call for homos to truly become men, to really awaken and develop their own innate masculine characters. It's a call for men who love men to leave the gay life behind, to trace their steps back to that common ground of boyhood experience and clear a path in the direction opposite to gay, without apologizing for their sexual preference. Only when that path is well worn, when many androphiles have proven by example that they are not constitutionally effeminate—that they are not 'hermaphrodites of the soul'—will the liberation of males with homosexual and bisexual preferences truly be complete.

Many misguided gays and feminists want to free people from constructs of gender by ignoring natural differences between the sexes and retraining men to be more like women; they want to liberate women and effeminates by destroying masculinity.

I don't want to destroy masculinity. I want to stake a claim to it for myself and other androphiles. I believe manliness is of value to males as individuals and in groups. Masculinity should be championed and honored, not subverted.

If reclaiming masculinity is a challenge you choose to accept, I've offered below a few suggestions for how you might go about beginning that process or consciously expanding it. It's not a complete process; it's not a twelve-step program. Men may be 'as alike as eggs' in some broad sense, but they lead remarkably different lives. This manifesto isn't a training guide for aspiring lumberjacks. Men come in all shapes and sizes. They have different talents and interests and aesthetics. Each androphile will start from a different place and make his way to a different end. These suggestions are just a few basic principles and catalysts for self-exploration that I've personally found to be effective, inspiring, and transformative.

USE LANGUAGE AS A TOOL TO ALTER PERCEPTION

Language is important. Words mean something; they're more than just combinations of letters. The word gay carries many effeminate connotations. It also binds you to people who

will be openly hostile to the very idea of reclaiming masculinity, as well as a lot of extraneous concepts that have nothing to do with homosexuality at all. Lighten your load, and avoid the word gay whenever possible. Switch to andro mentally, and use it in situations where others will understand what you mean.

Androphilia is just a word, but it sets up a different paradigm for understanding your own sexuality. It severs sexual desire from sexual identity and describes only desire. Instead of identifying you as a different sort of man and a member of a minority ethnic group, it allows you to perceive yourself as a man, essentially like any other, who simply has a different sexual preference based on his desires. The precise origin of homosexual desire is fodder for debate, and definitive answers don't seem to be immediately forthcoming. All that matters in everyday reality is your personal experience of that desire, and whether or not you choose to act on it.

Abandon Affected Gay Behaviors Stereotypically gay behavior is amplified effeminacy; if you do not believe that homosexuality and effeminacy are the same thing, there's nothing self-loathing about stripping away layers of gay affectation. Gay behavior is learned; it is part of the gay socialization process. Young homos affect gay behavior to establish a sense of belonging in the gay social group, but these affectations also exclude them from other social groups. To most people, including myself, extreme gay affectation signals a desperate need for any kind of attention—even negative attention. I am referring specifically to overtly theatrical gestures, lisping and typical 'princess' behavior. But many other minor gay behavioral ticks are viral; people pick them up simply from hanging out with homos and fag hags.

Honestly evaluate your own gestures, speech and behavior. There's no need to pick up some new affected macho style of speech or to adopt some ridiculous macho posture. It is enough to strip away the layers of learned gay behavior—to relax, to speak plainly in your own natural male voice.

ALTER YOUR EVERYDAY INFLUENCES AND EXPLORE MALE CULTURE

They say that the color of a room can change a person's general mood. In November, shopping malls start playing Christmas music to get people into feeling the Christmas spirit —and spending more money. When you leave a particularly engrossing movie, don't you carry a bit of it around with you for the rest of the day? It is difficult to overestimate the compounded psychological influence of your everyday environment and the things you choose to expose yourself to on a regular basis.

Many gay men's music collections consist primarily of female vocalists, and I believe that over time this has a profound effect on their psychology. They literally have women's voices in their heads. Balance out your collection by acquiring some male- oriented music; awaken yourself to the voices of other men.

Explore male culture. Seek out new and classic films that men typically enjoy. Find some male-oriented subject matter that interests you and read up on it, or, if you prefer fiction, pick up some classic adventure novels. Find a sport that vaguely interests you, learn more

about it and keep up with it. Take up a male-oriented hobby. Push yourself into some male situations that would normally make you feel a bit uncomfortable and out of place.

Immersing myself in male culture started out as an experiment, a desire to try a few new things. To my surprise, I found many things I'd dismissed as 'boring' when I was an adolescent to be peculiarly satisfying as an adult. Each such surprise sparked interest in another new direction. It really was like discovering a new world. Also, as my interests evolved in a more male-oriented direction, I found that I was able to identify with other men much more easily. I saw more and more of them in myself.

If you listen to people define or describe themselves, they often do so in part by listing their interests. An evolution of interests does have a significant impact on the way individuals perceive themselves, the way they present themselves, and the way they are perceived.

ADOPT A MASCULINE IDEAL

Earlier, I presented a few productive masculine values that I believe are both fundamental and specifically relevant to the lives of androphiles. Personalize this general code of honor and expand it according to your own masculine ideal, your own vision of the man you want to be.

Build a pantheon of productive role models. Start with ten men who embody manliness to you, based on their behavior, their code of conduct or their personal achievements. Select a combination of historical figures, fictional characters from books or films, living men, and men whom you know or have known personally. Since part of the point of this exercise is to reclaim a connection and sense of belonging with other men, at least nine of these should be straight men—don't remain pigeonholed by associating yourself only with other homos. Identify what you find appealing about the role models you've selected; emulate those qualities and look to these men for inspiration.

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH MEN

Most homos, even many reasonably masculine ones, have a disproportionate amount of female friends who treat them like 'one of the girls.' One fellow recently admitted to me that he doesn't have a single straight male friend, and this is actually quite typical of gay men over 25. Over time, these men become so culturally isolated and disconnected from other men that they have difficulty forming healthy male friendships with those outside the gay community.

Earlier, I wrote, "Masculine character is rooted in the firm sense that one is a man and belongs among men." If you're unable to maintain friendships and successful associations with men who have not been indoctrinated into gay culture, you'll never really develop a sense of belonging among men. Distance yourself from feminine influences for a while. You don't have to cut off old friends, but make an effort to befriend some straight guys. If you've developed some male-oriented interests and stripped away gay affectations, this shouldn't be that difficult. Treat them like equals, not like potential sex objects or members of some exotic tribe. If you respect their boundaries, share some of their interests, and are easy to

hang out with, most adult straight men won't care about your sex life. Developing a healthy sense of camaraderie with other men will ultimately prove extremely rewarding; it will change the way you perceive homosexuality and masculinity, and it will change the way you perceive yourself.

If you make this a project, if you make a concerted effort to do these things over a year's time, the worst that can happen is that you'll become a slightly more interesting, multifaceted person. However, I believe that many androphiles who have not really challenged themselves this consciously in the past will tap into aspects of their own bodies and minds that want to be developed. Through cultural and social stimulation, they will awaken a starved essential masculinity that will hunger for more of the same. They will gradually dissociate themselves from the stigma of effeminacy, they will become more than half- men—gay men—and become vital, confident, whole men to be reckoned with.

Andro Culture - A Fraternity Within

It has always seemed like some profoundly ironic cosmic joke to me that the culture of men who love men is a culture that deifies women and celebrates effeminacy. Wouldn't it make more sense if the culture of men who are sexually fascinated by men actually idolized men and celebrated masculinity? The essence of embracing androphilic desire is embracing the fact that you actually are a man who loves men. As a male who experiences that desire, perceiving yourself to be more womanlike is a cop-out, a compromise that places homosexual desire into a more familiar Mars/Venus polarity; it is essentially heteronormative. People expect men who prefer sex with other men to be constitutionally effeminate; gay culture conforms to those expectations. A movement of homosexual and bisexual men who refuse to conform to those expectations, who refuse to surrender their masculinity, who uncompromisingly relish the fact that they are men who love men and embrace that Mars/ Mars sexual dynamic would be truly revolutionary. A group of androphiles who champion and embody masculine ideals, who go out and earn the respect of other men on their own turf, who actively invalidate the smear of effeminacy by living as exemplary men? Now, that would really challenge accepted cultural norms.

The culture of androphiles should rightfully be an undiluted, unapologetically male culture. Androphiles who exclusively prefer sex with men have the freedom to become almost exclusively homosocial, to surround themselves with men and immerse themselves in the world of men in a way that most men simply cannot. With the exception of a few committed bachelors, women are always going to play a significant and moderating role in straight men's lives. Instead of working out Mars/Venus compromises, androphiles can create and inhabit completely male-oriented environments, free from feminine influence. In *Where Men Hide*, James B. Twitchell cataloged what he referred to as redoubts, places where men go or have gone to simply be men and escape the wife and kids—places like bars, basements, barbershops, garages, workshops, lodges, deer camps, dens, strip clubs, clubhouses and sporting events. Androphiles don't have to hide; they can thrive as men, living a dream life that most other men only escape to.

Androphiles have the opportunity to devote far more time to masculine pursuits, to doing the things other men wish they could do more often. I envision a world where androphiles become admired as knowledgeable outdoorsmen, avid hunters, successful sportsmen, skilled builders, do-it-yourselfers, shrewd businessmen, and accomplished leaders in their chosen fields. Androphiles could become known connoisseurs of male culture, collectors and enthusiasts devoted to the things of men, from war and sports memorabilia to automobiles to male-oriented books, music, artworks and films. As culture becomes increasingly female- and family-friendly, as 'men-only' institutions continue to fall from favor or become integrated, as masculinity is controlled, compromised and redefined according to the preferences and aesthetics of women—as straight men lose touch with their own masculine heritage—I see a role for androphiles as masculine purists, unlikely carriers

of Mars' ancient torch. Masculinity is a religion, and I see potential for androphiles to become its priests—to devote themselves to it and to the gods of men as clergymen devote their lives to the supernatural. What other man can both embody the spirit of manhood and revere it with such perfect devotion? This may sound far-fetched, but is it? If so, then why? Forget about gay culture and everything you associate with male homosexuality. Strip it down to its raw essence—a man's sexual desire for men—and reimagine the destiny of that man. Reimagine what this desire focused on masculinity could mean, what it could inspire, and who the men who experience it could become.

The androphile is not a fundamentally different kind of man. He shares with other men the same essential masculinity, the same experience of maleness. Even if some slight biological differences are ever proved, I believe the experience of maleness is ultimately far more profound. Sexuality should be no more than a subplot in the story of any man's life. A man's sexual preferences and drives may impact his private lifestyle and some of the choices he makes throughout his life, but to define a man by his sexuality and make sex the dominant theme of his life is shallow and almost always destructive—no matter what his sexual preference is. A man whose life is defined by fucking isn't much of a man at all. Being male is the fundamental source of identity for every male—before race, class or creed—and being a man affects virtually every aspect of a man's life. Being male affects the way we see and experience the world from the moment we're born until the day we die. All men are men first, and androphiles should be no exception. For androphiles, men are not others, they are brothers who share this experience of maleness.

The only truly meaningful difference between straight men and androphiles is one of desire —the focus of their sexuality. That difference will, however, lead to a slightly different lifestyle, because most androphiles will never become fathers. I don't think this is a bad thing. I don't foresee a shortage of children. The trendy Gay Party focus on synthetically creating gay families sets up an unrealistic, counterproductive and heteronormative model for what constitutes a fulfilling life by buying into the idea that raising children is the one true path to happiness and social acceptability. I believe androphilia is a calling to a different path, a path where happiness is achieved through activity and accomplishment, and fulfillment is found in successful relationships with other men. I also see androphilia as a vocation, a call to lead an uncompromisingly masculine life. It's a different life, to be sure, but one that offers many advantages that are seldom acknowledged or exploited.

Androphiles are not a separate race of men, but a brotherhood within the larger brotherhood of men—a fraternity within that fraternity. Just as all men share the common experience of maleness, the Bruderbund between androphiles is the common experience of androphilic desire and the different private lifestyle that develops as a result of that desire. Just as the brotherhood of men is a loose fraternity based on a single commonality, the fraternity of androphiles should be a loose association of independent men who have this one thing, androphilia, in common.

To be clear, I do not advocate the formation of some new cloistered community that offers group hugs and weekend retreats for homos to go beat on drums around campfires and share their feelings about masculinity and homosexuality. Homos are far too segregated

from other men as it is; they don't need a new ghetto to huddle away in. They don't need the complete, prepackaged lifestyle that the gay community desperately tries to maintain. What I am advocating is something far more dynamic and interactive. Androphiles don't need a distinct common culture, because their common culture and heritage is the one they share with other men. I see androphiles as a loose network of men who love men and who love being men, and as a result share some common interests and concerns. There is a long tradition of men forming fraternities based on common interests that do not define their lives, but merely enrich them.

The primary focus of any androphile's life should be achieving his personal goals. He should be going out into the world and building rewarding relationships with other men, both straight and andro. Take advantage of the flexibility that an androphilic life offers, take life by the balls—go out and try new things and pursue those you enjoy. Don't cling to other androphiles for support. Association with androphiles should only facilitate and supplement the vigorous living of life. Androphilia should never be a raison d' être; it shouldn't be your whole life and your whole identity, but merely an enjoyable part of what makes you the man you are.

Androphiles must be free to 'be their own men'—to have their own opinions and convictions, their own political and religious beliefs, to lead their lives as they see fit without looking to other androphiles for approval. Adolf Brand's magazine— arguably the first periodical specifically for homosexual males—was titled *Der Eigene*; which translates roughly to 'self-owners.' Androphiles should be 'self-owners;' sovereign individuals whose sexuality doesn't define their entire worldview. Androphiles can conceiveably be communists or capitalists, Christians or atheists, nationalists or anarchists. If androphiles were to work together for a common end, it should only be one that is directly related to common issues resulting from their sexuality.

The gay community today includes far too many people with very different interests. The threat of physical oppression that initially drew lesbians, the transgendered, queens and masculine homosexuals together is no longer a pressing threat in the West. There is no longer a need for 'all-for-one-and-one- for-all' lockstep solidarity among these very different groups of people. There is no longer a need for a big, motley surrogate family of people who have essentially nothing in common other than the fact that they have atypical sexual preferences and perceptions of gender. The world is factionalized; it's made up of different groups of people with different interests working toward different goals. It's always been that way, and it always will be so long as people are different and have different ideas and values. It's time for The Gay Party to factionalize, so these disparate groups of people can lead their own lives independently of one another and speak for themselves in their own voices.

It is one of the great failures of the The Gay Party as a whole that it advocates males coming to terms with and taking pride in their homosexuality, but never advocates these men coming to terms with and taking pride in being men. The Gay Party can't advocate this, because it is in direct conflict with the values of effeminates and lesbian feminists. If homosexual men who do find meaning and value in masculinity want to assert themselves as

men and lead uncompromisingly masculine lives, they will have to distance themselves from the effeminate gay culture that openly rejects masculinity and believes that homosexuality and effeminacy are inseparable. If queens love the gay culture and the gay identity, let them have it! Passive acceptance of the gay identity and membership in the gay community is passive acceptance of everything The Gay Party stands for, and passive acceptance of the stigma of effeminacy itself. Only by actively renouncing this identity and culture can masculine homos really free themselves to be men. By truly being men—by taking back our masculinity, by reclaiming male culture and heritage as our birthright, by becoming true men of masculine character, by striving toward a masculine ideal and earning the respect of other men—androphiles can actively change what it means to be a man who loves men.

AN ESSAY ON SAME SEX MARRIAGE

Agreements Between Men

In recent years, gay advocates, their opponents, opportunistic politicians and the sensationalist media have all worked tirelessly to cast same-sex marriage as an urgent matter of critical importance. Both those for and against same-sex marriage resurrect the issue at every opportunity. In the never- ending battle for leverage in the so-called 'culture wars,' same- sex marriage seems to be nearly as important and polarizing an issue as abortion or the theory of evolution.

Frank Sinatra famously sang that "love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage," and that you "can't have one without the other." It seems logical to many that love, even love between men, must be accompanied by some approximation of marriage. The cultural link between love and marriage is so firm that most of the people who do not oppose homosexuality on moral grounds simply assume that if two guys care about each other, they must naturally want to get married 'just like everyone else.' Many open-minded straights who value marriage, at least theoretically, see bans on same-sex marriage as mean-spirited and regressive. The maudlin portrayals of same-sex marriage presented to the media by gay advocates lead many to believe that virtually all homos out there are just dreaming of the day when they can marry.

That is bullshit, and even those who spin that fairy tale know it full well. Only a minority of homosexual men are truly involved in committed, long-term, completely monogamous relationships that approximate what most people would recognize as marriage. In many cases, the members of that minority are morally appalled by how overwhelmingly commonplace promiscuity and 'open relationships' are within the gay community. They believe marriage is the only way to curb their fellows and thereby make homosexuality presentable to their buttoned-down friends and families. However, because support for same-sex marriage has become the politically correct position within the gay community, many of those who support same-sex marriage these days don't even have steady boyfriends. Most value the romantic ideal of marriage far more in theory than in practice.

There's solidarity today among homos on the marriage issue that's somewhat misleading, even reactionary. Homosexual men who have no intention of ever getting 'married' in any conventional sense, who either believe that the institution of marriage is flawed and failing or who simply find it personally undesirable *still* seem to feel compelled to support same-sex marriage 'rights' for others—as if it is their duty to do so. There's an unwillingness to break the line on this issue, and this false front of spiritual solidarity is probably maintained more in knee-jerk reaction to the insulting rhetoric of same-sex-marriage opponents than because it represents something most homos actually want or desperately need. Default support for same- sex marriage also has to do with the way in which same-sex marriage advocates have framed the issue.

Opposition to same-sex marriage has been positioned as an affront to 'equality.' Normally sensible homosexuals have been led to believe that marriage is a 'right' they are being denied and that their 'freedom' is being restricted. Whether they actually want to get married or not, they are indignant about being treated like "second-class citizens."

The broadest base of support for same-sex marriage among homosexuals stems from a desire to prove something akin to the old folk etymology for *gay* as an acronym: 'Good As You.' Demands for same-sex marriage are not so much about the institution of marriage itself as they are about validation and acknowledgment. Gays desperately want the public to recognize that their relationships are 'as good as' straight marriages.

Many gays also seem to suffer from some sort of *gay exclusion paranoia*. So many of them have felt excluded or ostracized or belittled in the past that if they are made to feel as though they're being excluded from anything, they'll fight tooth-and-nail to be included, whether they genuinely want to participate or not. Similar to the way in which feminists demanded to be admitted to all-male institutions and clubs, gays want what they want in many cases simply because they've been told they can't have it. It's more a matter of principle than a matter of practicality. It's likely that marriage also seems exponentially more desirable to them simply because it is forbidden. Will they really want it so badly when they finally get it…after the novel becomes commonplace?

Because most cultures authorize and legitimize sexual relationships through the institution of marriage, same-sex marriage advocates believe that it would be in the best interest of all homosexuals if they had the opportunity to legitimize their relationships in *exactly* that way. I say *exactly*, because many same-sex marriage advocates believe the word *marriage* is absolutely essential. They frequently make ham-fisted, dubious references to black civil rights battles, and consider anything different, even in name, from *marriage* to be 'separate but equal.' As a bonus, making melodramatic references to famous civil rights battles against racial discrimination leverages white guilt—effectively portraying even the most reasonable and rational opponents of same-sex marriage as being no different from sheet-sporting racist bigots.

Although same-sex marriage advocates commonly refer to the legal benefits of marriage, these benefits are invoked only as supporting arguments that serve the primary goal of including homosexuals in the institution of marriage and validating their relationships in the eyes of society. Concerns about simple things like being allowed to visit a loved one in the hospital during an emergency seem reasonable and valid, but these are trotted out only to tug at the heartstrings of the otherwise-unsympathetic. The handful of human tragedies portrayed in maudlin gay propaganda could more easily be solved by reforming health care policies, and are peripheral to the central arguments for same-sex marriage.

There are many rarely explored pragmatic arguments against extending the oft-cited legal 'rights, benefits and responsibilities' of marriage to homosexual couples. Obviously, contemporary marriage has a rather poor rate of success among straight people. For every 'happily ever after' scenario, there is a marriage that doesn't end so happily, and the mechanism of divorce can cause more financial and emotional stress than a breakup that

doesn't involve lawyers or the court system. Same-sex marriage will be great for divorce lawyers, but bad for homos—many of whom will suffer far more from having been married than they would have suffered from not being able to marry. And even if the union results in perpetual marital bliss, not all of the 'benefits' of marriage are necessarily beneficial, depending on a couple's financial situation. Any such rational wariness about the institution of marriage is waved away as 'defeatist mentality' by gay-marriage idealists. To them, the details don't matter; the big picture doesn't matter. It doesn't even matter if marriage is truly the resounding success they believe it will be, based purely on dreamy hopes and speculation. To same-sex marriage supporters, it's the principle of the thing that matters.

However, my argument *against* marriage between men is also an argument based on principle. The various legal pros and cons of civil marriage are beside the point. What really rubs me the wrong way is applying the cultural institution of marriage to a relationship between two men.

Relationships between men can certainly be 'as good as' relationships between men and women. Actually, in light of my personal experience, I daresay they have the potential in many ways to be *better than* relationships between married men and women. But the two relationships *are* different, because men and women are different. Sexuality is not race. A black man and a white woman are still a man and a woman. They're still likely to have children as a result of sex, and it is in the best interest of society that they form a strong bond and stay together. This is simply not the case with two men.

To me, whether I am legally allowed to marry another man or not isn't an equality issue. I don't care about petty perceived slights against equality. I'm not concerned about making absolutely certain I'm being treated exactly the same as everyone else. I don't just want a bond that makes me feel 'equal.' I want something *better*. I want something that makes more sense for two men. I don't think homosexual men, as a group, will benefit from inheriting all of the baggage associated with an anachronistic, embattled institution that was never designed to accommodate the distinctive character of their relationships. I believe they are far better off handling their own affairs and negotiating their own private agreements. And if they adopt a tradition, it should be one that is in harmony with the unique character of bonds between men.

Marriage is not a 'freedom', and it is not a 'right.' Marriage is an institutionalized social control. It's a cross-cultural solution to the basic problem of attraction between the sexes that attempts to promote the most stable environment for the rearing of the children that a man and a woman are extremely likely to produce. The fact that some married couples do not or cannot produce children is incidental to the fundamental purpose of marriage. Marriage has historically forced men, who are statistically far more likely than women to abandon their children otherwise, to take responsibility for those children. Additionally, because women have only recently gained the opportunity to support themselves financially, marriage has traditionally ensured that females would be cared for outside of their parents' homes. The institution of marriage evolved primarily to care for women and children. The state has taken an active role ensuring the support of single mothers, and women no longer need men to financially support them. These are two key reasons why, today, many marriages do not last.

There are other mechanisms in place that achieve the primary goal of marriage, and the responsibilities that once fell squarely on the shoulders of men are now more evenly distributed, and are at any rate easily shifted. Men know that women can care for themselves on their own, and if *both* parents abandon their children, *someone else* will care for them. At its most basic level, the institution of marriage is not a 'right' or a 'freedom' but a social and legal solution to a problem two men simply do not have.

To same-sex marriage advocates, marriage is really just about love. But marriage for love alone is a relatively new thing. Effective birth control is a new thing. Many straight couples today get married for love, but for most of them marriage remains the first step in building a family. It still makes a modicum of sense for society to be involved in promoting a stable, long-term, legally binding union for the benefit of any children that a couple may produce, either by design or by accident. Because two men can't reproduce, the same rationale does not exist for involving the rest of society in ensuring they remain bound together. Because children are not naturally a factor, communal involvement in a sexual relationship between adult men to promote monogamy or stability 'for their own good' smacks of nanny-state busybody- ism. Sexual relationships are private matters, and there is no good reason why communities, or even families, need be involved in what have always been private agreements between men. Two self-supporting adult men should be *expected* to take responsibility for their own happiness, and work out their living situations and personal relationships on their own.

For some advocates, institutionalizing same-sex marriage is a thinly veiled attempt to impose a moral ideal that they value on all homosexual men, creating a hierarchy of legitimacy for male/male relationships with marriage as its pinnacle. Most of these guys are either religious gays who seek an approximation of the union spiritually endorsed by their religion, or romantic idealists who have seen one too many chick flicks. (Often, they are both.) There's really no talking to either group because to both, marriage is a gilded, magical thing that's been placed on a pedestal and filmed in soft focus. For both, marriage is the ultimate evolution of love. Any other arrangement is less than ideal in their eyes, no matter how much sympathetic lip service they charitably pay to the regrettable eccentricities of their peers. But what they aspire to will always be an imitation of something that has thousands of years of history behind it, something that has been celebrated and romanticized in art, literature, theater and…those chick flicks. Though they assert that their relationships are 'as good as' marriage, their marriages will never be quite the same.

Men and women are different. If they weren't, there wouldn't be so many books of the *Men Are From Mars…Women Are From Venus* ilk out there to help the two sexes figure each other out, and a lot of marriage counselors and talk show hosts would be out of work. I've been the confidant of both straight men and straight women over the years, and in most cases the differences in male and female psychology are so pronounced that I'm really quite amazed they *ever* manage to get along. Men and women have different wants and needs, and they process and interpret information very differently, especially when it comes to romance. Only in a postfeminist world would I even have to write this. It used to simply be common sense. And it still is, in the everyday world. We easily recognize and laugh at the obvious differences between the sexes all the time when they are comedically presented in film and

on television. But when it comes to writing things down, folks are far too careful. Most writers avoid angry feminist critiques by attempting to minimize or discount sex differences —unless they are therapists who get paid to acknowledge those differences and help people make sense of them.

Sexual relationships between men were forced underground for so long that very little exists in the way of example when it comes to models of long-term bonds. The cultural catalog expressing love between men and women is endless. There have been poems, songs, myths, paintings, plays and films about virtually every possible love scenario between men and women imaginable. Raised in the same society as everyone else, it is understandable that homosexuals would idealize their relationships following a male/female model. They simply paste in someone of the same gender instead of the opposite, make a few quick adjustments, and move on. However, the way that romance and courtship are conceptualized—the whole history of what is called 'romance'—is an expression of the specific emotional exchange between men and women.

What is considered 'romantic' is so often just men prostrating themselves before the altar of the vagina. Romance is an elaboration of courtship; it's men doing things they wouldn't normally do to make women feel special and desirable. Few men are concerned with buying flowers, offering chocolates, picking a special song, remembering anniversaries, having candlelit dinners, or doing virtually any of the things associated with cinematic, 'Valentine's-Day-style' romance. Men do these things because women want them to—and because they usually lead to sex. What is romance if not just some big dance to get into some girl's pants? (Or the perennial celebration of said quest for the benefit of women, to reassure them they are still desired?) Most women have distinctly different needs, different interests and generally have a different aesthetic sensibility. Romance caters to this sensibility. Romance affirms a woman's femininity; it affirms her mythic role as a sensual goddess and sexual gatekeeper.

When I hear gay men wistfully talking about romance, I just don't get it.

I'm a guy. I don't need or want my femininity affirmed. Everyone wants to be appreciated, but men show each other appreciation in different ways. I don't want to be swept off my feet or romanced. I don't want some guy bringing me flowers and I don't need him to make me feel special and pretty.

In fact, after a few times I think I'd find that insulting and emasculating—as would most straight fellas if their girlfriends started treating them like princesses. If you think I'm desirable, initiate sex. If you love me, make me a sandwich when you make one for yourself. Make some sort of personal sacrifice for me. But I don't need to be doted on or fawned over or put on a pedestal. If you want to make a man feel good about himself, you don't treat him like he's delicate and pretty—you make him feel strong and capable and self-sufficient. Men want to feel like heroes, conquerors—maybe even villains—but never damsels in distress. Queens love to play the role of damsel-in-distress only because they imagine themselves to be womanlike and take women as their role models. For men who aren't performing that clichéd shtick, even less theatrical acknowledgments of frailty, ineptitude or powerlessness

are uncomfortable at best.

I've seen so many gay movies that imitate straight romantic scenarios in virtually every detail, portraying homosexual men as if they were plain Janes pining away, hoping against hope that the quarterback of the high-school football team would ask them to the prom. This is not my fantasy. It has nothing to do with my life. Frankly, it's fucking gay. Gay romance is a borrowed dream. Same-sex marriage is a borrowed dream. It's a bait and switch. We're all supposed to want this romantic ideal of husband and wife that society celebrates, so gays switch out a woman for a man and call it good without acknowledging what that switch really means, or what it really changes. Instead of acknowledging the different dynamic between two men and the different ideal it could engender, we're all supposed to walk along whistling as if we were none the wiser. Encouraging two men to adopt a male/female romantic ideal is asking them to be something they simply are not. It's essentially saying that the unique dynamic between two men is in fact not 'as good as' a straight relationship unless it is an awkward reflection of the traditional heterosexual romantic ideal. Expecting homosexual men to live up to an ideal so ill fitting is unrealistic, stifling and potentially harmful. It also seems a bit sloppy and unimaginative.

Relationships between men have their own character, more akin to other bonds between men than to romance between men and women. Love between men is less 'Romeo and Juliet' than it is 'Joey and Chandler.' Or 'Bert and Ernie.' There is something distinctly fraternal in the emotional exchange between two men over time, even if their relationship is sexual. Men understand each other better; they're playing from the same handbook. That Mars/Venus push and pull is absent. Romance and gender conflict are exchanged for a more intense version of the Mars/ Mars camaraderie that brothers and best pals enjoy. There's no need for the elaborate courtship rituals; there's no demanding vaginal goddess to placate with sacrifices of masculinity. Men tend to crave sex more regularly, and masculine men don't require the same sort of reassurances—as women do—that they are loved before and after the act. They're better able to separate sex from other emotions. And, being naturally less emotional or at least less emotionally erratic, men are more likely to work things out with one another in simple, practical terms. Instead of presenting love between men as a mere approximation of the masculine/feminine romantic mythos, why not acknowledge the natural fraternal character of the male/male bond and draw inspiration from *that* tradition?

The folly of same-sex marriage is best symbolized by the familiar two grooms on a wedding cake. Marriage is a mountainous, multilayer, white-frosted cultural confection, and gays simply commandeer it by knocking off the bride and substituting a second groom. They ignore the substantive foundation of the cake itself—the layers of historical meaning and tradition and the fundamental purpose of marriage—and make a hasty, superficial switcheroo. Same-sex marriage is graffiti on the Parthenon; it's Andy Warhol. It's hollow pop appropriation. Same-sex marriage is the fetishization and repurposing of something mechanically, automatically revered by many.

Why is the cake white? Why is there a cake? Why is there a ceremony? Why is the bride 'given away'? Who is the bride? Why the veil? Why the garter? Why the rings? Whose family should foot the bill? Who tosses the bouquet? Why are there gifts, and why do people care

enough to give them? What are the vows? What do they mean? Why were they written the way they were written?

Virtually every tradition, every movement, every symbol, and every symbolic gesture that is part of the usual marriage ceremony and every expectation about the bond created during that ceremony is rooted in tradition. These things *mean something*, something that has absolutely nothing to do with two men or two women. To render gender irrelevant by saying that marriage is really only about love is a gross oversimplification. Marriage is a ritualized institution designed specifically for men and women in almost every aspect. Only in a relativist's world wherein gender is meaningless—and *meaning* is meaningless— could the idea of a same-sex marriage ceremony be anything but an exercise in absurdity.

The tradition of marriage is aesthetically and emotionally designed to accommodate and emphasize a feminine element that is lacking in a male/male bond.

Marriage caters to women. Brides-to-be are almost always far more involved—sometimes frighteningly so—than men in planning their ceremonies and receptions, hence the taunt: "Bridezilla." Weddings are for the most part female-oriented affairs replete with flowers and all sorts of decorative girly ephemera. I've seen two sisters and some friends plan weddings, and the groom almost always tends to take a step back— commenting only when he finds something deeply distasteful. (Dispute this if you like, but do note the circulation of bridal magazines for women and the conspicuous absence of anything remotely similar for grooms.) It's not that wedding ceremonies aren't meaningful to men; it's often the *men* who tear up during the ceremony. But it is almost universally understood that a wedding is *her* special day. Almost every little girl begins daydreaming about her wedding at a very young age. Even dolls come with wedding dresses. While the wedding rehearsals may not *officially* begin until a few days before the wedding, brainstorming sessions and dry runs are often well under way before girls enter preschool. Little boys are raised to assume that they'll get married eventually; it's presented as a step in a successful man's life path—more like a graduation than the aspirational fantasy it is for females. Some men, especially creative men who see it as a challenge or a fun project, do get involved in the planning of their weddings. But let's be honest here; for the most part, weddings are a chick thing. That's fine, but what the Hell is the point of encouraging a bunch of guys to go through the motions of something that is essentially the romanticized presentation of a beautiful virgin?

This may sound crass, but even after being with my compadre for the better part of a decade, the idea of the two of us walking down some aisle and exchanging vows before our families still seems like a bad, fish-out-of-water comedy skit. I love the guy more than anyone on the planet, but I can't imagine getting through the thing without breaking into fits of uncontrollable laughter. And what am I going to do at the reception? Dance with my dad? Should my aunts and uncles tap their champagne glasses until we kiss? Have people really thought this out? It's not that I'm embarrassed or ashamed of being an *androphile*, but there's something deeply comical and more than a little unmanly about two men getting married according to a heterosexual tradition. It's funny in the way a fat bearded guy in a dress is funny.

Instead of glossing over the differences between men and women and pretending that the relationship between two men is the same as the emotional exchange between a man and a woman, it makes a lot more sense to explore the uniqueness of that relationship and develop a tradition that makes sense for men. Bonds between men aren't something to be dismissed simply because the bonds between men and women are so exalted. There is a tendency in modern, postfeminist culture to make light of or even snicker at male friendships and male traditions. However, the history of male bonding is actually quite rich and inspiring in its own way. Bonds between men are different from bonds between husband and wife, but they are far from meaningless. Some straight men form such strong bonds that each guy would gladly take a bullet for the other. Is *that* trivial?

Acknowledging difference does not mean acknowledging inferiority, as the hysterical evangelists of 'equality' believe. So many gays pay lip service to the notion that 'diversity' is something to be cherished, but they seem Hellbent on establishing not diversity, but artificially imposed sameness. Bonds between men have a unique character. That's not something to be ashamed of or swept under the rug. Men who love men deserve their own tradition; they deserve the opportunity to develop something that may or may not resemble marriage at all, but which is shaped by the distinctive experience of Mars/Mars interaction and by the real nature and the real needs of men.

Why not draw from the rich traditions of close fraternal bonding between men and develop *those* traditions into something aesthetically and conceptually suitable for *androphiles*?

For instance, there is a cross-cultural tradition of men becoming 'blood brothers.' It seems to be instinctively appealing to men; young boys often learn of this tradition and become brothers via some intermingling of blood. Love between *androphiles* simply adds a sexual element to a close male friendship, and the idea of creating a sense of brotherhood could provide a means of creating family that better befits the nature of the relationship itself. There's a potent symbolism to the idea of sharing blood that has proved extremely meaningful for men who loved each other in a platonic way over the millennia. Sharing blood could mean vowing to care for another man's body as if it were your own. Conceptually, if not technically, each brother always has the other's blood running through his veins. This is a union in the most meaningful sense, but also in a specifically masculine sense.

Today there would obviously be concerns about the spread of disease through such a practice, but this isn't a bond that should be entered into any more lightly than marriage. If one partner does happen to have a blood-borne disease, there are also traditions wherein the blood is combined in a vessel and poured onto the earth—so that the blood of the men remains mixed there forever.

A twist on the idea might be something as accessible as getting a pair of matching tattoos at the same time—something sailors and military men have long done together to create a sense of brotherhood. There are certainly other rituals that men have performed throughout history to bond themselves to one another, up to and including modern fraternity hazing, and these uniquely masculine expressions of love merit exploration by *androphiles*. Men

already have ritualized mechanisms for bonding. There's no need for two men to go through the motions of being a man and a woman.

The difference between most blood brother rituals and the spectacle of modern marriage is that blood brother rites usually tend to be private, meaningful, organic exchanges between men while marriage ceremonies are lavish, showy, public affairs. With two men, there is no joining of gene pools, there are no biological children, there is no true need for acknowledgement between two families. There is no need for the community to broker this deal, because the community really doesn't suffer if the two men go their separate ways. Men are expected to be self-sufficient whether they are married or not. Why should the community be any more involved in their private lives than it is in their ability to financially support themselves? Is something automatically more meaningful because it is said before others? Isn't it possible that some things are best kept private, that some emotions are in fact cheapened when showcased, spotlighted, and exhibited for the comment, evaluation and approval of relatives and relative strangers alike? Is love only valid if it's properly validated?

As a man, I find the private agreement to be even more meaningful and a bit more dignified than the public one. A private pact wherein each man sets his own terms reinforces the masculinity, sovereignty, and independence of the men involved. As time goes on, they may reconsider the terms of that agreement to assure it remains mutually satisfactory. In the context of a private agreement, men choose to be together completely of their own accord, and it is this element of choice that I value most about my own relationship. I am not with my compadre because of our families, or because society says it's the right thing to do or because I entered into a contract with him in public. If we separate, no one else will really be inconvenienced, and we will not be scorned any more than we would have been anyway. We are two men of independent means who in some sense choose to be together every day. We remain together and take care of each other because we want to, not because we have to. We are bound not by law, but by our own free wills. That is freedom, folks—not having the state lay down some one-size-fits-all standard that determines the most desirable way for grown men to conduct their private lives. The bond my compadre and I share is something that brings us happiness and fulfillment privately, but if we were to grow apart, that too would be a private matter. This privacy makes our pact *more* meaningful to us. Our arrangement is our own, and involves no one else. It is 'just between us.' It is an agreement between men.

I wouldn't want it any other way.

Note to the 3rd Edition

Readers who are interested in alternative commitment rites for men will find many in the follow-up to *Androphilia:*

Blood-Brotherhood

and Other Rites of Male Alliance

by Nathan F. Miller and Jack Donovan

1st Print Edition (A Survey for Androphiles)

ISBN-10: 0578030705

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2nd Edition (Edited for a general male audience)

Currently available for Kindle

AFTERTHOUGHTS

2010 Afterword

"The Last Thing Homosexual Men Need More of Is Each Other"

"Where can I find other *androphiles*? Is there a group I can join?"

That's probably the number one question I've received from homosexual men in the years since *Androphilia* was first published. Some men saw themselves in the book and realized that there might be other men out there who were disgusted with what the gay community had to offer in terms of culture or politics. Some men were happy and wanted to reach out to others, some were lonely and looking for a sense of camaraderie. For a few men who were deeply involved in the gay community, *Androphilia* was a harsh wake-up call, and many of those men found themselves lost and angry and at odds with everything and everyone familiar to them.

In his book on *Honor*, James Bowman wrote that "honor depends on the *honor group*."[33] The loss of the honor group—the group of men who will hold you to a certain standard—is one of the most difficult problems for any man living in our modern world who wants to live an honorable life. Our egalitarian, individualistic society cultivates a relativism that is ultimately incompatible with hierarchical, resolute visions of heroic honor and manhood. Heterosexual men at least have history to draw from; they can live with the venerable ghosts of honorable men.

Homosexual men can draw from that rich history and honor their ancestors as well, and that's what I advocated in *Androphilia*. But on the subject of how to live an honorable life as an openly homosexual man, history has only bits and pieces to offer—homosexual men are forced to make up the rest as they go along. The gay community has a motherly tendency to nurture, affirm and include all of its lost boys, no matter what they do.[34] So it is temptingly easy for a man who was roused by *Androphilia*—who was awakened to the enduring appeal of the aspirational masculine ideal—to backslide into bad habits, self-indulgent rationalization and impotent modern equivocation. So long as he calls himself gay and toes the line, the gay community will happily embrace and celebrate him no matter what he does, no matter how depraved or destructive his behavior is. When he falls, fails, dies—or just becomes a miserable, wretched and infantile human being—the gays will excuse, comfort or mourn him by blaming the cruel and conveniently inevitable specter of heteronormative culture. They'll say that the world was just too hard on him, with its pressures to conform to society's norms. In all reality, his problems likely stemmed from the fact that his life was too damned easy and he was able to remain perpetually adolescent, avoiding or ignoring any firm, harshly critical paternalistic influence that might have set him on a better path.

I suppose I could have spent the rest of my life after writing *Androphilia* as some sort of self-

help guru, telling eager buggers how to live their lives like modern knights, teaching remedial manliness to homos trying to get in touch with their inner daddy. And I toyed with it. Toward the end of *Androphilia*, I admit that while I warned against *androphiles* creating some "new cloistered community," I also got a bit wrapped up in my own rhetoric and started dreaming of a new homosexual community, a new honor group, something *better*. Some readers actually told me I had *an obligation* to create this community. I ran a message board for a while, and that was educational in its own way. But I didn't write *Androphilia* because I wanted to spend the rest of my life talking about homosexuality with homosexuals. I sure as hell didn't write it to hold myself up as the perfect exemplar of manliness. I think of myself as a pretty average guy. I wrote it *because someone had to write it, because I was passionate about it, and because unlike many others I had almost nothing to lose.*

What would the purpose of a group of *androphiles* —of homosexual men who love men and love being men—really be? The gay community is for the most part a glorified collection of pick-up bars, social services and left wing political action groups. The pick-up bars exist so that men who want to have sex with men can meet each other and get laid. The social services provide…services…like HIV testing and so forth. The political groups all have principles and priorities and goals, however misguided they may be. They have a reason for being. They have something *to do*.

What would *androphiles* do? What would they want to achieve?

OK, so you're glad to know there are other homosexual men who don't spend all day chattering about celebrity gossip or trying to look fabulous. Good for you. You're men. *Manly men*. But is there really a point to an orchestrated association of masculine men who prefer men? What are you going to call it? "*Remaining Men Together*?"

Any regular gathering of masculine homosexuals for the purpose of being with other masculine homosexuals is bound to devolve into either a pick-up scene or a therapy group — probably both. One big circle jerk full of guys with big, hairy shoulders to cry on.

If you really want to be a better man, I'm not going to bullshit you. I don't have a system for you to follow or a series of instructional videos to sell. I'm not a therapist and I really don't want to hold your hand or help you work through your feelings about manhood or your father or that guy who made fun of you in junior high school.

But I can tell you this one thing I've learned.

The last thing homosexual men really need more of is each other.

I don't keep a lot of homosexual men as close friends. I stay in contact with some of my readers via email or social networking sites. I've met a few in person, many of them are great guys, and some have truly earned my respect. But every homosexual male has some connection to that gay world I left behind when I wrote *Androphilia*, and that shared experience is too easy to fall back on as a common frame of reference, a source of humor, something to bitch about.

And when I'm talking or thinking or writing or laughing about the gay world—I'm not learning anything. I've been there and done that. The music and the fads and the haircuts change, but I find that whenever I revisit the gay world, it is still pretty much as I left it. Three years after publishing *Androphilia*, I don't have much to say about the gay community, *because I'm still right.*

There are worthy, decent, masculine guys who move through or identify with gay social circles for various reasons, but they are the men they are *in spite* of the gay community—not because of it. They stay grounded because in most cases they've maintained some sort of connection to a broader group of male peers. These men have healthy relationships with their fathers, or their brothers, or their straight friends or co-workers. They are not concerned merely with the perceptions of homosexual men, but also with their reputation among these other men. Traditionally masculine homosexual men have to be able to square what they do and how they act with how they want to be perceived by a makeshift honor group of heterosexual men whom they respect or admire.

Other homosexual men, no matter how honorable they may be as men on their own terms, always emit some gravitational pull back to a gay spiritual chasm that is characterized by effeminacy, depravity and dishonor. It is virtually impossible to escape that gravitational pull if you surround yourself completely with such men. It's not that homosexual men can't make great friends, but if you don't want to be defined by your sexuality, you can't live in a social world comprised mainly of homosexual men and the women who inevitably latch onto them.

Homosexual men seem *safe*. They'll make it easy to remain comfortable. They'll be less likely to challenge you, and they won't force you to explain or examine your sexual preferences and choices. You'll never have to justify your existence. They'll make it easy to be lazy. Homosexual men probably have an idea of where you've been, psychologically and emotionally. They're going to be more likely to make excuses for weakness, to cut you some slack. They're more likely to *understand*, and relying on that easy understanding can become a crutch.

Homosexual friends offer a homosexual man an escape from judgment, an escape from the harsh, hierarchical criticism of straight men. But if you're going to truly be a man among men, if you're going to be part of the world of men, you have to seek out that criticism and learn how to handle it like every other man. To be protected is to be excluded and set apart. Seeking protection of this kind is a character flaw to be overcome, a mark of weakness. Vulnerability is not a masculine value. Strength is the defining metaphor of masculinity, and strength of any kind can only be cultivated by testing it against some kind of resistance.

The idea that you can remake the world so that heterosexuality isn't "normative" is pure insanity—it's exactly the kind of unreason that seems to issue forth from any isolated "think tank" of echoing gay voices. If you're going to be a man who prefers to have sex with other men, you're going to have to get used to being different. You're going to have to be able to handle some teasing and the reality that some men may not be able to wrap their heads around the idea that you can have sex with men and not be some sort of depraved half-man/half-woman. You can hide from other men by surrounding yourself with gays and

women who will never challenge you and who offer the unconditional acceptance of a nurturing womb. Like so many urban gays, you can cluster in your own "hate-free zone" and speculate feverishly about the cruel outside world and the hateful, barbaric men who rove its savage badlands. Or you can strike out and face that resistance, test yourself against it, find out what kind of man you are, and make your own way.

A circle of homosexual men will offer you comfort and a limited sense of belonging, but because 95% of the men in the world are straight, only straight men can really give you a tacit sense of your place in the world of men. All men are not equal, but all men are flawed and fallible and occasionally total assholes. Some will expect more from you than others. Seek out the kind of men who will make you *prove* your worth, who will make you *earn* your place, who won't allow you to use your sexual preference as an excuse for not being the best man you can be.

After writing *Androphilia*, I felt an obligation to walk my talk. I put myself in uncomfortable situations and surrounded myself with a bunch of men who had different aptitudes, who didn't mince words or worry too much about my feelings, who really gave me a hard time, who pushed my buttons, who made me prove myself. And I still have to, all the time. Hacking some hard company and building friendships and working relationships with men who I me never could have found common ground with as a younger man has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. Breaking those personal boundaries and facing my own irrational fears and rejecting weak rationalizations of my own character flaws has changed me and made me so much more confident and comfortable in my own skin than I ever have been. It's an ongoing process, but it should be. Any man who says he is completely secure or self-realized is stupid, superficial, incapable of self analysis or full of shit.

In the West, men no longer have many formal initiations into manhood. We live in a world with safety nets in place to catch us when we fall, and social institutions that will pick us up when we fail. We can play carelessly like boys forever. Or we can choose, like knights errant, to seek out our own trials. It's the only real path of honor we have available to us. There is no end to it, but we gain ground by facing our fears and pitting ourselves against the world, always pushing. Comfort is for the weak and the dying. The satisfaction of manhood is overcoming the ordeal. Or perhaps it is the ordeal itself, something in the moment as much as the memory of it. Honor is both a public thing and a private thing, but ultimately a man is alone with his honor—his sense of himself as a man. In this way, a life lived honorably is its own reward.

"Qui plus fait, mieux vault." – Geoffroi de Charny, *Book of Chivalry.* (1350)

—Portland, Oregon.

June , 2010.

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ARCHIVE

2008 Essay: "Why I Treat Straight Men Like Married Women"

Women do not, for the most part, become more or less sexually attractive immediately following their wedding day. A good looking woman is still a good looking woman, married or not. Some women are in happier marriages than others, and some married women are probably more "available" than other married women.

But for honorable men, married women are "off limits."

It is acceptable to appreciate a married woman from a distance. It is generally acceptable to offer a married woman an innocent compliment, though even this can be precarious depending on the tone and nature of the compliment, as well as the personalities of the woman and her husband. You can say "that's a very nice necklace," but you don't say, "you've got a great ass." Unless you really know that woman and her husband well, and feel confident that you know their boundaries, married women are almost completely "hands off." A friendly handshake is usually appropriate, but hugs and virtually any other physical contact must be initiated by the woman herself. Any social contact which could be misconstrued as a sexual advance runs the risk of straining or ending a friendship with both the woman and her husband—even if you think you know them both well enough to play around a little. In the old days, getting a little too handsy or flirty might land you in a duel. Today, you still may find yourself out on the street with an angry husband in your face. Bad, bad Leroy Brown might have been "the baddest man in town," but even he "learned a lesson 'bout messin with the wife of a jealous man."

Hitting on another man's wife brings his honor—as well as your judgment, integrity and morality—into question. And it is a question of primal urgency. By disrespecting the boundaries of his marriage, you presume that he will not defend those boundaries—that he will not defend his mate and his family—either because he is too weak or too cowardly or too impotent in some other way. This is monkey brain stuff, adapted for The Naked Ape.

Human societies have created a variety of different solutions to this basic part of the mating game, almost all successful civilizations have established social controls that stigmatize the man who "covets" another man's wife. It's a rational solution. You might very well be able to drag a weaker man's wife off into your cave by the hair, but most of the other men in the village will publicly frown on your behavior and distrust you, even if some are privately impressed by your demonstration of dominance. In civilized society, we have to establish some ground rules, and it is just too much of a pain in the ass to have every guy trying to hump every other guy's wife the second his back is turned, whether the wife in question is willing or not. If you don't want other men hitting on your wife—if you want them to respect

your boundaries—it's fucked up to run around hitting on their wives.

Homosexual men and heterosexual men have historically had, to put it lightly, a strained relationship.

One of the biggest strains—if not the single biggest strain—on relationships between homosexual and heterosexual men is caused by confusion about or outright disregard for the sexual boundaries of heterosexual men. Homosexual expression between adult men has always been a minority phenomenon, so while homosexual males have to deal with straight males throughout their lives, heterosexual males have limited experience dealing with male homosexuality. Further, for the better part of human history, homosexual expression between adult men has been forbidden or scorned, so heterosexual males weren't supposed to know how to deal with male homosexuality. When homosexuality itself is against the rules, there is no need to establish rules for interacting socially with homosexuals. Many men still believe that homosexuality is in some way immoral or sinful, though most men today aren't overly concerned about it, so long as their own personal boundaries are respected.

If homosexual men and heterosexual men are going to interact as peers and friends in a society that does not forbid homosexuality, then these men are going to have to do what civilized men have done to resolve these sorts of recurring problems that strain social relationships. They're going to have to establish some universal ground rules.

Some homosexual males like to imagine they could "seduce" any straight man, or that all straight men secretly engage in homosexual acts or have homosexual fantasies.

Sure, some straight men are more "available" than others. Some would fumble around with another guy given the right situation and a few adult beverages. Some would go there for the right amount of money and the condition of relative anonymity, or under extremely extraordinary circumstances. Some guys would really not cross that line if they were totally plastered, offered a million dollars, and someone had a gun to their head. Given those choices, most heterosexual men will insist they are in the last category.

None of that matters.

If a woman says she is married, you don't casually feel her up or try to get her drunk or make sexual comments about her, just to test the waters and make sure.

If a woman says she is married, she is married.

Likewise, if a man says he is straight, he is off limits. You don't casually feel him up or try to get him drunk or make sexual comments about him, just to test the waters and make sure.

It's about respect.

If a man wants other men to respect his marriage, he should respect the boundary of marriage. If a woman says she is married, he should assume she means it.

And if a homosexual man wants other men to respect his sexuality, instead of just making the assumption that he is sexually confused or "unenlightened," he should give the same

respect to the sexual identities of other men. If a man says he is straight, you should assume that he means it.

If a homosexual man attempts to cross that boundary, unless the heterosexual man makes the first move, the straight guy has every right to be angry. Hitting on a straight man brings his honor—as well as your judgment, integrity and morality—into question. It's an insult suggesting that he doesn't know himself, that his boundaries don't mean anything. By disrespecting the boundaries of his sexuality, you presume that he will not defend those boundaries. You deserve to be corrected, with prejudice. And if, as a homosexual man, you make a habit of crossing the sexual boundaries of straight men, it makes perfect sense for those men to distrust you, to keep their distance, to publicly frown on your behavior and to socially ostracize you.

Trust and a sense of mutual understanding are integral to any meaningful friendship. Every social organization relies on a set of basic and universally respected ground rules in order to function efficiently and effectively. The basis for a friendship between a homosexual man and a heterosexual man—indeed, the basis for any meaningful acceptance of homosexual males into the broader fraternity of men—has to be trust. Straight men who live in hip, liberal urban environments may get used to an overabundance of homosexual males,and they may learn to laugh off, ignore or even be flattered by the creepiest advances of their homosexual peers. But that's not quite the same as establishing trust, and it doesn't fly outside the city limits.

Real male friendship, what Aussies would call "mateship," is an alliance built on trust. You want to be able to trust a buddy to get your back, without worrying that he's secretly waiting for the opportunity to poke you in the butt. You can trust a real pal around your wife, and likewise, you should be able to trust that he won't violate your own sexual boundaries. Only when that trust has been established can anything resembling a real friendship between men occur. It's a pop psychology myth that men have "problems" expressing themselves. It's been my experience that even the most standoff-ish regular Joes are often willing (and sometimes surprisingly eager) to talk about the most embarrassing or personal aspects of their lives—with another guy who has earned their trust, who doesn't have a secret agenda and who won't use the information against them later.

That trust is the foundation of friendship should be obvious, and the idea that homos should respect the sexual boundaries of straight guys should also be obvious. But it doesn't seem to be obvious enough. Too often, homosexual males throw good sense out the window and start thinking with their dicks. I've watched them recklessly overstep obvious and reasonable boundaries again and again, and then get butt-hurt when straight men want to keep them at arm's length. I've heard horror stories from straight men about homosexual men who leer at them, catcall, make snide sexual innuendos about them, or hit on them outright in public—forcing them to awkwardly assert their heterosexuality or have everyone assume they are homosexual. And when those men do assert their heterosexuality, no matter what the circumstances, homosexuals seem more than happy to reflexively tar them with the "homophobia" brush and label them "insecure."

I've been saying for a few years now that the real work for homosexual males lies not in political coercion, but in building alliances with straight men. Many heterosexual women think male homosexuality is just dandy. The real strained relationship remains where it has always historically been—between homosexual and heterosexual males. Any reconciliation between these two groups has to happen on the interpersonal level. Straight men shouldn't simply be told that they have to become great pals with homosexual men and treat them like regular guys, and then pretend that any sexual advances are meant to be "harmless." If homosexual and heterosexual men are going to maintain meaningful male friendships, homosexual males are going to have to demonstrate some respect for the sexual boundaries of straight men. They're going to have to start thinking of straight men as being "off limits." When they do, my experience has been that the end result is well worth showing a little restraint. It's not a bad trade-off. It's rational, it's fair, and it's civilized.

This is why I treat straight men like married women.

—Originally posted online 2008.

2008 Interview:"Andro in the Army"

An Interview with a Reader

Since the publication of *Androphilia*, I've been in contact with several men who have credited me with influencing their decisions to pursue careers in the United States military. I am both humbled by this, and proud that I played some part in steering young men onto an honorable course.

I have a profound respect for men in the armed forces and law enforcement. If I were younger, single and without prior commitments, I might very well join these young warriors. A military life is far more attractive to me than the litany of servile, masturbatory "careers" in money-grubbing available out there in the soulless sprawling momist bureaucracy of the modern business world. I encourage young androphiles to at least consider enlisting provided that they have no particular calling to another linear career path–partially as an antidote to the progressive poison of the gay scene's powerful social influence. But more than that, the military, its "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy aside, offers healthy male camaraderie, and it helps a lot of young males get their shit together and become MEN.

One of these young MEN recently contacted me, and during the course of our exchange it occurred to me that I would like to provide some evidence of this welcome though unintentional influence of the ideas presented in *Androphilia*. I would like to thank this young MAN for allowing me to interview him, though of course this discussion is presented in such a way as to maintain his professional anonymity.

What are some of the reasons you decided to join the military? If possible, please describe the thought progression and the chain of events that resulted in that decision.

I grew up always hearing about the Army. My father was a Reservist for many years in the Army Med Corps. So I've always had the image of the male archetype as a soldier in my head. As time went on and I began living the "gay lifestyle" I turned away from that and many other overtly male things. It wasn't until my third year in college that I seriously thought about joining.

By that point I had grown out of the gay lifestyle, it was no longer fun and fresh. I had realized it for what it was and tossed it aside. I began to think about how I was trading the supposed gender stereotype for a slew of other stereotypes which were not very flattering. I began looking for loans and scholarships to continue college, with the eventual goal of attaining a degree in psychology, and stumbled upon the Army. I spoke with my Dad about what the Army had to offer, and what I could expect if I joined. At first I merely toyed with the idea, me being a "gay" man who had shied away from sports, was going to join the Army and go through Basic Combat Training (BCT). I thought it was ludicrous. Then I stumbled upon some of the early essays that later became Androphilia, and I had an awakening of

sorts. I realized I could do this once I stopped conforming to the weak, victimized, "woe is me" attitude of the gay community. I shed it all and reinvented myself. I bulked up a bit, started exercising (lost my "twink" build) and began to look like a real man.

I went to see the local Army Recruiter, who was a rather handsome blonde haired, blue-eyed stud, and enlisted.

How did you perceive yourself before you made the decision to enter the military? What was your civilian life like; how did you spend your time?

I touched on my civilian life above but I'll elaborate.

At the time I joined I was going to a local community college and working at TGI Fridays as a host/cook/waiter. On the weekends however I was a stripper at Club Heat on O Street, in the shady part of DC. It was a great way to pull in a few hundred bucks in a night's work. Getting into the gay community such as I did gives me some interesting hind-sight. Many times in the club various leaders of the gay community would come into to meet and greet with "their people". We wonder why people have this twisted view, we need merely look at our own to behavior to see.

In my free time, which was scarce, I usually read and worked on various papers for my courses. I was also President of the GLBT group on campus; however, running a meeting there was like herding cats while in the midst of bitter bitch-fest by the members. We actually never accomplished a task, as most of our members used it like a dating service, then when things turned bitter it became a forum to air someone else's dirty laundry.

How has your perception of yourself changed after serving for a year?

After a year of service, I like the person I have become. I also feel that small piece of gay life that hasn't left yet.

I am much surer of myself, I have no fear that someone is going to gay-bash me, which in my 21 years of life has never happened to me or any or my out friends.

I also gained a great deal of pride for serving my country. A thing most people, gay or otherwise, never get around to doing.

I am stronger, happier, I have also gained skills most people will never get, and I have been able to see things from a different perspective.

In the liberal, politically correct world of college education, I had no idea what most people truly thought of certain issues. Being that the Army is a rather conservative, "ole boys club," I have seen things through a new set of eyes. Issues such as the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy which used to get me foaming at the mouth about gay rights, now make sense. I am able to be level headed about a great deal of things and be an individual, instead of spouting things I've read in the latest HRC update, or an Advocate interview of some new gay civil rights hero.

You mentioned that "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" made more sense to you now. Would you care

to elaborate?

The "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy is to me a middle of the road approach to the entire subject. While meant to maintain unit cohesion, it also allows gay men and women to serve as long as they keep their proclivities to themselves. I feel this approach was a good idea when President Clinton signed it into law. However, these days the mass homophobia it was meant to circumvent is by and large gone from the military. Regardless of this fact I feel it is still a viable policy because though most people would be comfortable with it, there will always be that small percentage of people who on some base level are repulsed by the idea and in a combat situation you need to know you can count on that person for cover fire, first aid, etc. So in a way the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy" is there to protect the lives of homosexuals in the military. Whereas before I thought it was some vast right wing plot to stifle the freedoms and liberties of gays, I now see it for what it truly is, a protective measure for both gays and straights.

I don't think my perception of that would change if I were dating a civilian, though it would likely lead to some arguments as far as why because I need to stay "closeted" and by default both of us have to stay closeted. Dating someone else in the military is a blessing in disguise, due to the strong bonds formed in the military it is not strange for me to meet him for lunch or that we live together. We work in the same area and people just assume we hang out based on shared interests and live together because it's a cheap way to live off base.

Has your androphilia affected the way you interact with your male peers in the military on a day-to-day basis, or affected your ability to form strong non-sexual bonds and friendships with other soldiers? Do you think you would be ostracized by those peers if they knew you were attracted to men?

My androphilia has actually allowed me to make deeper bonds with the guys I work with. The military is charged with homoerotic energy and there are numerous occasions daily where someone tries to push beyond your comfort level. On any given day there are hundreds of instances of ass grabbing/slapping, and insinuations with gay subtext. All of these are meant to rattle your cage, and since they really don't bother me that much I'm thought of as unshakable. This cool under fire persona has allowed me to gain the respect of the soldiers I work with. I think; however, that if they were to find out I was attracted to men some of the respect would disappear. Most of the younger guys wouldn't care as much but there would be a sense of dishonesty for not letting them know up front. By and large they would likely understand the position that I am in, and on the rare occasion I did tell someone of my choice in sexual partners it has never been a problem. But as I said, that is a rare occasion.

What would you say to a young man who is an androphile, and who is currently considering a career in the military? What advice would you offer him?

To anyone gay or not, I would say joining the military is not a decision to be taken lightly. There are loads of benefits to joining, however you must be capable of fulfilling the obligations set forth by whichever branch you choose. I have seen too many people who join

thinking that in a time of war the Army will take anyone and push them through training only to find they can't take the pressure. Then these people attempt to get a Section 8 discharge for mental instability and have wasted the government's time and money. The biggest problem will be shedding the homosexual mantle of being a victim most gays seem to have adopted. Weakness is not a trait the Army is fond of. You will have to change your perception of things and begin to take charge of the world around you.

However, if you make it through Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training life isn't too bad. You can still indulge in*androphilia*, you just have to practice some discretion. No proclaiming your love from the rooftops! All in all if you can think you can do it, DO IT! It is a great opportunity and a life changing experience.

Finally, in light of your experiences, has your perception of what it really means to be a male who is attracted to other males changed? How important is your sexuality to your overall sense of identity–what are the qualities that you feel define you as a man, and where does your sexuality fit into that picture?

To an extent, yes, my view has changed. Back in the day when I considered myself a gay activist, my sexuality was the very forefront of who I was as a person. Now, it is very different, my sexuality is a smaller facet of my life. I view it as more of a fetish than as a descriptor of who I am as a person. I define myself as a soldier and worry more about my duties than the local gay scene and the drama that goes along with it. While my relationship is very important to me, my love of men is more of a hobby than a driving force in all that I do.

—Originally published online November 2008.

2012 Essay: "The Homosexual Question"

Why Same-Sex Marriage Is Still Wrong, But Repealing DADT Is Right

From the right, there's not much to like about gay men.

The highly vocal and visible queer fringe publicly celebrates extreme promiscuity, sadomasochism, transvestitism, transsexuality and flamboyant effeminacy. It is so unabashedly Marxist that even Marx himself would blush. It is anti-military, anti-patriarchal, anti-nuclear family, anti-Christian, aspirationally vegan and virulently anti-Western. Queer theorists—the pink-haired, punk rock stepchildren of feminists—blame straight white men for all of the wickedness the world has to offer.

Gay moderates, much like moderate Muslims, offer their tacit approval to queer extremists because they refuse to openly condemn extreme behavior for fear that they'll look like traitors, Uncle Toms or hypocrites. Gay conservatives of any variety are scarce as leprechauns, and not nearly so beloved by their lucky fellows when spotted. The average gay man is politically progressive and politically correct, he's a multiculturalist, and like his fellow progressives he's particularly enamored with European styles of government, however failed and fundamentally flawed.

Ask the average gay fella to "act like a man" and you'll often uncover a simmering, patricidal rage aimed at what his Berkley-trained pals call "heteronormative" masculine ideals. He rather likes the way manliness looks, of course, but traditional behavioral codes of manhood seem to exclude him—and he's a bit sour about it. So he finds comfort in feminist talking points. He claims to believe that the sexes are basically the same, that "true" masculinity is so flexible a concept that it can mean whatever he wants it to mean, and that most straight men are emotionally stunted and trapped in a labyrinth of pointless, counterproductive old codes. Being "liberated" from these codes makes him feel, at least privately, a bit moreevolved than his knuckle-dragging hetero peers. This phenomenon has made many homosexual men the sworn enemies of traditional Western manhood.

There are two big «homosexual questions» currently in play in American politics: same-sex marriage and allowing homosexuals to serve openly in the military. Quasi-conservative arguments have been made in favor of both, but each gains a majority of its support from the progressive left. So the knee-jerk reaction from the right is to respond to both with the garbled consternation of the bloated, slobbering and confused Grand Old Party. The two questions are fundamentally different, and deserve separate consideration.

Same-Sex Marriage

Same-sex marriage, however good its proponents believe it might be for homosexuals, is essentially an attempt to subvert the cultural primacy of the reproductive family. Gays will not allow themselves to consider the fact that this spells death for civilizations, and that society has a rational interest in promoting big, patriarchal families above all other arrangements. The idea that somehow, without any cultural apparatus to encourage or foster it, men and women will naturally take on the burden of raising a large family at any cost is simply absurd and proven wrong by below replacement level birth rates in Europe. Cultures that don't place the highest value on reproductive families die out, and their numbers are replaced by cultures that do. It's happening in Europe, and it's happening in the US. While alternative relationships need not be openly scorned, and they may deserve some sort of reasonable accommodation, it isn't in the best interest of Western Civilization-or any civilization-to morally or institutionally equate reproductive and non-reproductive sexuality. Reproductive sexuality is an indispensable building block of civilization; it serves society as a whole. Non-reproductive sexuality is, in the big picture, basically a "feel-good."

In spite of the rote protests from same-sex marriage advocates, many of them do seek a redefinition of the basic rules of marriage. As I have long observed, and a recent study confirms, same-sex "marriages" are very often non-monogamous, "open" relationships. The NYT article cited spells it out: "some experts say boundary-challenging gay relationships represent an evolution in marriage—one that might point the way for the survival of the institution." Many gays believe that altering marriage in this way would be good for everyone, but heterosexual relationships have a different dynamic, and I've met few straight men or women who truly want or who could even tolerate an «open» marriage. I fail to see how «evolving» marriage in this way would provide a stable environment for child rearing in the long run. What works for two men will not necessarily work for a man and a woman.

Same-sex marriage is also a symbolic victory for those who want to see the sexes rendered absolutely interchangeable. It›s about the dissolution of traditional gender roles. There is no husband or wife, merely a set of «partners» engaged in an easily dissolved, mutually beneficial business arrangement. This is another way in which same-sex marriage reconfigures traditional marriage to bring it into alignment with the models preferred by feminists and other cultural Marxists. Strong, patriarchal families have always been a bulwark to Marxism. Interchangeable ants with loose ties to one another work much better in the Marxist ant farm.

There is a rational middle ground between criminalizing homosexuality and equating reproductive sexuality with non-reproductive sexuality. What we›ve learned about homosexuals in a generation or two of open homosexuality is that, objectionable ideological leanings aside, for the most part homosexual men aren›t predatory, and they can be productive citizens who follow the rules. Instead of repeating the ill-informed barbarisms of the past, we can acknowledge homosexual men as a human resource and integrate them into mainstream civilization, but at the same time refuse to redesign Western Civilization in the image of San Francisco. Allowing homosexual men to serve openly in the military is that kind of rational, right-thinking compromise.

A Right-Thinking Repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"

Allowing women to serve in the military dissolves traditional gender roles, and in the big picture contributes to a reduced birth rate. It's also pretty obviously a triumph of ideology over efficiency. That issue isn't even on the table any more. But anyone arguing from the right against a change to DADT on the basis that it would somehow decrease efficiency or morale should at least have the courage to go on record saying that allowing women to serve in the military is exponentially less efficient and exponentially more disruptive than allowing a small percentage of men to be open and honest about their atypical sexual preference could ever be.

Allowing homosexual women to serve in the military will encourage their non-traditional gender expression, but we already allow women to serve in the military, so that's kind of a moot point. A recent blog post at The Volokh Conspiracy made some reasonable points about lesbians in the military. They are less likely to get pregnant, less likely to get STDs, and if you believe that they are particularly manly women, they may do better (and be less disruptive to male social dynamics) than straight women in the military. It could be a good thing, so long as you don't let lesbian politics get a foothold, or allow their nesting tendency to push the military into validating same-sex marriages.

Allowing more men to serve in the military upholds traditional gender roles. If your complaint about homosexual men is that they are flamboyantly effeminate, punishing the ones who want to conform to masculine gender norms by joining the military is just bitchy.

As far as I›m aware, there are no popular proposals to recreate the Sacred Band of Thebes, or establish special "gay" units outfitted with flirty pink spandex uniforms. A mockery of military masculinity may be a concern for many, but that's not what is being proposed.

A right-thinking revision of the military policy regarding homosexuality would eliminate a problematic government restriction without creating a new problematic entitlement. It would accomplish this, and only this: It would stop men (and women) who are conforming to every other military code of behavior and honorable conduct from being dismissed from the military as a result of admitting homosexual behavior in their private, civilian lives. It would allow homosexual men with a respect for order and a desire to live honorable lives in service to their nation to do so without the dishonesty that DADT requires.

A right-thinking revision of the military policy regarding homosexuality would include no special rules, no special standards, no special entitlements, no over-compensating political correctness, no coddling. Problems encountered by homosexuals in the military and their peers should be handled judiciously on a case-by-case basis, as they occur, and tracked until patterns emerge and informed decisions can be made about how to handle them.

While there are certainly reasonable concerns about changing DADT policy, the most fevered objections seem to have sprung forth from the lurid gay-panic nightmares of the men making them. But heterosexual men willingly share locker rooms and showers with known or suspected homosexual men in gyms across the country every day. Young men have homosexual roommates "come out" to them all the time and many remain friends. It is no longer uncommon for college fraternities to accept homosexual members. This has been going on for at least a couple of decades now in the civilian world, so pretending that mixing

openly homosexual men with heterosexual men is some completely untested "social experiment" being forced on the military is not accurate.

I work with blue collar straight men every day, and I recently shared a hotel room with a few of them during an out of town trip. Their biggest complaint was my snoring. These are regular guys, though, and if they'd been asked whether or not they'd be comfortable sharing a room with a known homosexual man-without knowing me-of course they would have said that they'd rather not. But because they knew me, it was no big deal. I suspect most reasonably masculine homosexual men who interact with straight men "in the wild" and outside of politically correct, protected zones will recognize that duplicity. A common reflex for men is to envision the worst-case hypothetical homosexual-probably some prancing theater queen eager to play grab-ass-and that should be taken into account when evaluating the importance of military polls concerning DADT.

The key to successful homo/hetero male friendships is simply maintaining a healthy respect for boundaries. Isn't respect for boundaries really the key to any male friendship or social interaction? Homosexual men who do not respect the sexual boundaries of their straight peers quickly find themselves pushed out to the «omega» zone. They're shut out socially, as they should be. The same goes for flamboyantly effeminate homosexuals. In the military, I suspect an openly homosexual male who does not respect those boundaries, or who becomes persistently flamboyant, is going to find himself a very lonely guy, very quickly-no matter what the official policy on homosexuality is. However, my experience has been that if you act like a man, men will treat you like one. If a homosexual man respects other men›s boundaries, and he puts his «identity» aside, for the most part they›ll include him and judge him based on his conduct and whatever else he brings to the table.

I am in contact with several homosexual men who are currently serving in the military, and have interacted with or heard the stories of several others. They are the best examples of what homosexual men can be, and often find that their own values are in conflict with the values of the mainstream gay community. They tend to defy expectations and disprove negative stereotypes. They›re in the military because they›re trying to be good men.

Of course, if you object to homosexuals serving openly in the military on mainly religious grounds, it's possible that no extra-religious argument will be able to sway you into believing that these men truly can be good men. But if you›re willing to concede that a homosexual man can be good man, why not allow him to prove you right?

One of the most popular-but also one of the worst-arguments against allowing homosexual men to serve openly was summed up last year by James Bowman:

They say they demand the "right" to make the supreme sacrifice for their country, and yet they are unwilling to make the presumably lesser sacrifice of being publicly reticent about their sexual behavior, or the sacrifice of not being in the military.

Bowman's book about Honor is excellent, but his position here is crass. DADT is enforced in such a way that any evidence of homosexual behavior-even in off-duty, off-base, private life-can and has been used in investigations leading to discharge. That means any private photo,

any email, any instant message provided to the military by anyone, civilian or service member, can initiate an investigation even if the soldier in question is completely silent about his sexuality while on-duty.

Someone taking this position has obviously never really tried to imagine exactly what being "publicly reticent" about one's sexual behavior would actually mean if one lived in close quarters with other men, under stress, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Anyone who has ever socialized with young men, or even watched a movie that shows men socializing, knows that one of the ways young men bond with each other when women aren't around is by talking about women and sex with women. The topic is going to come up again and again in routine casual conversation-no "flaunting" of sexuality necessary. Being "publicly reticent" also means that homosexual men can never speak to their fellow soldiers-their brothers in arms-about a meaningful part of their lives. No talk of someone "back home." Guarded phone calls. Deception. Fake back stories. These men who work so closely with one another and who are supposed to be willing to lay down their lives for each other can never reallyknow this «publicly reticent» homosexual who shrouds his personal life in secrecy. The existing policy denies these men their basic humanity and implies that their personal relationships are no more important to them than if they were casual backroom encounters.

Further, isn›t it inconsistent to suggest on one hand that homosexuals are morally dissolute and then on the other hold them to a higher moral standard and demand that they make more sacrifices than their peers who are already doing some of the hardest jobs in the world?

The gay left may see the repeal of DADT as another checkbox on their cultural Marxism checklist, but support for the «right to serve» in the military from the left seems conflicted at best. These are the same people who drive around with the «It Will Be a Great Day When the Schools Get All the Money They Need and the Air Force Has to Hold a Bake Sale to Buy a Bomber" bumper stickers. Many whine about the rationales for current wars, but in truth they would find a reason to oppose virtually any war. In most cases, the reason they are on the left in the first place is because they buy into a non-violent «noble savage» fantasy of human nature. They look down on men who join the military, and in many cases consider them to be «part of the problem.» Displaying this outright disgust for the military in the media is political suicide, so smart progressive politicos drop all of the right feel-good phrases about service and honor-though traditional concepts of honor are repugnant to them. To the left, the military is just another government agency to lobby for progressive interpretations of "equality" and "change." Ending DADT is an opportunity for the left to get something right in spite of itself.

A Path of Honor

As I suggested at the start of this essay, it's easy to think of gay men as the Cavity Creeps of Western Civilization.

But this is at least in part because conservatives and homosexuals have both failed to

envision a path of honor for homosexual men in a right-thinking society. Until recently, Western conservative thought was so tightly tethered to Biblical condemnations of homosexuality that envisioning such a role was impossible. Right now there are disenfranchised, bitter fags promoting cultural Marxism actively or passively at every level of society. But it doesn›t have to be this way, and it hasn›t always been this way.

We don›t know what causes male homosexuality. There are competing theories, some more convincing than others, and certain traits appear to correlate strongly with male homosexuality.

The nature of homosexuality makes it difficult to measure-it›s not an obvious trait, like having green eyes or brown hair. Homosexuality is a behavior, and while you could conceivably study every single self-identifying, exclusively homosexual male, there›s a lot of homosexual behavior going on out there in the world that happens behind closed doors. We can›t, with any reasonable level of certainty, say that we know the mind and body of every man who has ever had a voluntary sexual experience with another man. Even today, there are men who have sex with other men who are not «out;» some will remain married with children. If we were somehow able to throw those guys into the mix, the data pool would probably get muddier and further challenge what we think we know about males who engage in homosexual activity.

Science has failed to discover a magical on/off switch for male homosexuality-and not for lack of trying. It›s probably just not that simple; there may be multiple combinations of factors involved. Male homosexuality, like many human behaviors, may be caused by complex interactions of nature and nurture, of biology and psychology.

What we do know is that homosexuality happens. There is evidence that male homosexuality has occurred in some form in almost every known human society. It has been institutionalized, controlled, repressed or outlawed to varying degrees -- but it happens. Faced with the reality of millions of reasonably productive and mentally stable men and women, putting political ideologies aside, even many social conservatives are now willing to admit that homosexuality is more complicated and more difficult to correct than mere vice. We may never know what causes male homosexual desire in every instance, so perhaps it is fairest to think of it as a case of “crossed wiring.”

So long as their sexual behavior is consenting and poses no direct physical threat to others, allowing men to do what they want to do with their own bodies on their own time is “liberty.” We don’t have to throw parades to celebrate it or socially equate it with reproductive sexuality, but having big brother policing what men do in their own bedrooms is an offense to their individual sovereignty. It may have happened throughout American history, but on a conceptual level it is fundamentally un-American. American soldiers fight to protect a nation wherein, unless there’s a damn good reason, we can tell the government to get off our lawn.

If we take the rational position and acknowledge that “homosexuality happens” and admit that while homosexual behavior is controllable, homosexual desire is in most cases practically intractable, can we conceive of a way to successfully integrate homosexual men

into a civilization thatisn't suicidal? If homosexual men can get over their «daddy issues» with patriarchy and straight men can put aside the «gross-out factor» associated with male homosexuality, we can meet in the middle and come up with some third way between total repression and hedonistic liberation that allows homosexual men to serve rather than undermine a right-thinking, sustainable, family-oriented Western civilization.

A common apprehension about tolerating homosexuality is that it will lead to widespread effeminacy. While a quick flip through the cable channelsshould strike fear into the hearts of all red-blooded American men, metrosexuals and emo kids are symptoms of the collapse of traditional gender roles brought on by feminism and our pampered, industrialized society, not merely the tolerance of homosexuality.

Some studies of homosexuality seem to track a lack of manliness more convincingly than they track homosexual behavior itself. On average, more male homosexuals are less manly than their straight male counterparts. But this is only correlation. There are some extremely effeminate straight men. There are also many male homosexuals who test well in areas where men typically excel, or whose everyday conduct blends into the normal range of male behavior. It makes sense to distinguish between homosexuality and effeminacy.

Manliness, as Harvey C. Mansfield put it, «is an exclusion of women but a reproach to men, to unmanly men.» The feminist answer to this, advanced by effeminate straight men like Michael Kimmel, is to reject the notion of a manly ideal outright as an oppressive, destructive fiction. Take your toys and go play like the girls. This is also the typical gay response to the reproach of men. The traditional male approach has been to recognize a certain hierarchy of manliness and make peace with the fact while manliness is the ideal, men are varied in their abilities and are able to embody that ideal to different degrees. Most men can admire manliness in other men and agree that manliness is good, while acknowledging that some men are manlier than others. No matter who you are, you are not always going to be the alpha-men award points for valor, and ask that you do the best you can.

It is possible for a society to accept that homosexuality happens, even as it continues to reproach unmanly men. Flamboyant effeminacy seeks an affirming audience. If homosexuality is tolerated but effeminacy is socially discouraged, if even omegas are expected to behave like men to the best of their ability, then the acceptance of homosexuality will have a negligible impact on the manliness of society as a whole. Flamboyant effeminacy is only a degenerative problem when it is celebrated, as it is in contemporary gay culture and sensationalist pop culture. If homosexuality is tolerated, but homosexual men are held to the same standards of masculine conduct as other men, we can begin to look for ways that non-reproductive men might be better suited for certain roles that support the infrastructure of a sane society.

Serving in the military is certainly not the only way that homosexual men can contribute to society-not everyone is suited for military life. A volunteer military can't function unless there are men trading, innovating, working hard and serving their communities in the

private sector. There are other paths of honor open to homosexual men, and we should encourage them to take them.

But where manhood is concerned, there is truly no "equivalent" of war. Strength is masculinity›s defining metaphor, and no experience tests a man›s mettle like the crucible of combat. Barring homosexual men from military service is an offense to their manhood, a dishonor that suggests they are somehow by the nature of their sexuality alone unfit for the rigors of combat. This is clearly not the case.

Consider the humbling story of Lt. Col. Victor Fehrenbach. No matter what his personal political beliefs might be-it really doesn't matter-this man has achieved more as a man than most men ever will. In 22 years of service he›s been awarded nine air medals, including one for heroism. He received it for piloting a malfunctioning fighter jet through enemy missile fire and ultimately destroying his target on the night the army took Baghdad. In 2008, a third party revealed his sexuality to the military, and now he›s facing discharge under DADT. The fact that our government is worried about what a guy like this does in his bedroom when he›s off duty should be a source of national shame. I would love to see some spoiled, corrupt, limp-dick senator tell this man to his face why he hasn't earned his pension.

Homosexual inclinations alone do not make men unfit for combat, but the very nature of homosexuality makes it unlikely that most homosexual men will ever raise a family. This may actually make them a better fit for the military in some cases. Homosexual men are free agents, able to accept stressful positions that require long or inconsistent hours or a substantial amount of travel—factors that can put pressure on growing families. Unattached homosexual men are in a better position to take risks, to relocate, to take stations in isolated areas. They're better suited to give their lives to their work.

The most exciting thing about the alternative right is that it offers those of us who grew up in the modern age to release ideas from both the right and the left- to reconsider, recalibrate and recombine them. We came of age during a period where a grand social experiment was underway, an age of flux. Our ancestors had less information than we do, but they weren't idiots. Not all traditions are arbitrary and outdated. They were solutions to basic human problems, and many of those old solutions are still relevant today. There are pillars of Western Civilization which must be rebuilt if it is to survive, but also some that we can do without. There have been inefficiencies and injustices in the past, but modernity has created its own inefficiencies and injustices.

Men who came of age in the 1980s, 1990s and the naughts have in many cases come to regard homosexuality as a virtual non-issue. This is due in part to the left's sexual revolution, but also to the deluge of information that flows through the Internet. What was once unspeakable and shrouded in secrecy and lurid rumor is now accessible to the curious with a few keystrokes. Most men know that there are despicable gay males who validate every negative stereotype and even help create new ones. But they have also worked with or known a few openly homosexual men who were basically decent, productive guys who have benefited from healthy male influences and strong male role models.

Many young men have, however, also begun to recognize that the sexual revolution has its

downsides for men and women and society as a whole. If Western culture is to survive in any recognizable form, the patriarchal, nuclear family cannot become a quaint anachronism that thrives only in the state of Utah. A new balance must be found.

The project before us is to revive and reinvigorate the West. It is my hope that we can learn from the 20th Century experiment, and do this armed with a better understanding of male homosexuality.

Allowing homosexual men to serve openly in the military is one way that we can literally enlist them in the service of Western Civilization, instead of as the agents of its destruction.

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[1] "Gay Dream Believer: Inside the Gay Underwear Cult" appeared in Simpson's 1996 book, *Anti-Gay*. *Anti-Gay* is one of the very few books I've encountered that dares to question the basic assumptions of mainstream gay culture.

[2] Pension plans are quickly becoming irrelevant as they are being replaced by more flexible (if in many ways inferior) 401(k) plans in many major corporations. This issue is important to many Baby-Boomer-generation gays as they approach retirement (hence the sense of urgency), but few in my generation and the generations that follow will be able to look forward to pension plans. Arguments for same-sex marriage based on access to pension funds will soon be moot. 401(k) plans allow individuals to specify any beneficiary, regardless of relationship.

[3] Specifically, Tatchell's essays "Goodbye to Gay" and "Is Gay Just A Phase," both presently available at http://www.petertatchell.net/.

[4] Sullivan's "The End of Gay Culture And The Future Of Gay Life" can be read at http://www.andrewsullivan.com/ , and was originally published November 1, 2005 in The New Republic.

[5] Greenberg, Crompton

[6] Greenberg

[7] Crompton

[8] Crompton

[9] Crompton

[10] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Holocaust Encyclopedia- "Persecution of Homosexuals in the Third Reich" (http://www.ushmm.org/ wlc/en/, accessed 4/23/06)

[11] Indeed, I'm well aware that by writing this, my own behavior will be placed under a microscope, with queens and straights alike looking for 'evidence' that, as one fellow already put it, I'm secretly the "faggiest fagola in fagtown."

[12] Genet, Jean. *Querelle*. - "It seemed to him that he was pressing his face against a mirror and that his tongue was excavating the inside of a statue's granite head."

[13] Heavey, Bill. "The Fat Man – In Hunting Camp, Size Does Matter."*Field & Stream*.(online) http://www.fieldandstream.com/

[14] Cantarella

[15] For more on this, see Steven Zeeland's entertaining *The Masculine Marine*.

[16] Mark Simpson. "Curiouser and curiouser." http://www.marksimpson. com/ (February 15, 2006)

[17] In antiquity, it was believed that the relationship between Achilles and Patroclus was a sexual/love bond. Of course, in Wolfgang Petersen's *Troy* (2004), they were 'cousins.'

[18] (B.R. Burg) Plutarch. *Lives*, "Pelopidas."

[19] King of Prussia from 1740 –1786. (Crompton)

[20] Zeeland specializes in interviews with homosexual men in the military. See his *The Masculine Marine* and *Sailors and Sexual Identity*, among others.

[21] Crompton

[22] See specifically Carl Whittman's "Gay Manifesto," circa 1970.

[23] Carey, Benedict. "In Men, 'Trigger-Happy' May Be A Hormonal Impulse." *New York Times.* May 9, 2006.

[24] Fielden, J., C. Lutter, and J. Dabbs. 1994. "Basking in glory: Testosterone changes in World Cup soccer fans." Psychology Department. Georgia State University.

[25] "GIT-R-DONE" is attributed to Daniel Whitney, aka 'Larry The Cable Guy.' Incidentally, it's also been my personal slogan while writing this manifesto on a deadline. I tried to figure out who said "Go Big or Go Home"

[26] I'm using the words soul and spiritual in a metaphorical sense, but you may take them however you like.

[27] My point here is that sports are not getting less violent, or 'more sensitive.' I love Ultimate Fighting and I think it may provide just the kind of positively managed hypermasculinity that young men crave.

[28] In both the literal and 'poetic' sense of the word.

[29] Paglia. *Vamps and Tramps.* "No Law In The Arena."

[30] Harris, Daniel. *The Rise and Fall of Gay Culture*. "The Death of Camp."

[31] Quoted from the Greg Araki film *Mysterious Skin.*

[32] Mansfield. *Manliness.* Mansfield separates manliness from masculinity, but I view the terms as being virtually interchangeable. I use them that way here, as I believe they are used in everyday conversation.

[33] Bowman, James. *Honor.* Encounter Books (2006).

[34] That is, at least, so long as they don't question the ever-expanding leftist gay agenda, support conservatives or those one the right, or openly pass judgment on other members of the community. Then, you'll get an earful and find yourself, as one of my interviewers put it, "off the reservation." But you know that already, don't you?

Gay "diversity" is like the Village People. You can all wear different stupid outfits as long as you sing the same stupid song.